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LIFE MORE ABUNDANT

SCRIPTURAL TRUTH IN MODERN
APPLICATION

BY

HENRY WOOD

AUTHOR OF "IDEAL SUGGESTION," "STUDIES IN THE THOUGHT WORLD,"
"THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE," "THE NEW THOUGHT
SIMPLIFIED," ETC.

"The faith of immortality depends on a sense of
it begotten, not on an argument for it concluded."

Horace Bushnell.



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE AND SHEPARD CO.

OCT 8 1905

Book of
The Author
(1263)

PUBLISHED, AUGUST, 1905

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LIFE MORE ABUNDANT

P R E F A C E

AMONG the important progressive movements of the present time, perhaps there is none more far-reaching in its relations than the emancipation of the Bible from literalism and formalism. This great work is many-sided, and it invites the aid of every one who can make any contribution to its moving forces. The aim of the writer is spiritually constructive. He would undermine no one's faith in the Bible, but rather brighten and deepen it, and aid in its establishment upon a surer basis. We are living in a period of transition and unrest. To conserve a true faith in the midst of the present uncertainty should be both the duty and pleasure of every friend of vital Christianity.

At a time when professional and technical scholarship is so widely engaged in Biblical interpretation and criticism, it would appear that there is little room for anything additional. The clerical profession, to its honor, is taking up anew the study and solution of the inner significance of the Scriptures, and the general search for truth for its own intrin-

sis value was never before so keen and thorough. And yet, it hardly can be questioned that many of the broadest and best of the higher critics are not entirely free from the bias, conscious or unconscious, of denominational training and association. Again, owing to the technical and voluminous character of their researches, their work is more especially fitted to the capacity of scholars than to the popular mind. It involves a thorough specialization, for which, even the clerical profession, in general is not well equipped. But the product of these eminent scholars may be taken at a reasonable valuation and used as common capital, and any one is at liberty to make it the basis for more general and popular deduction and implication.

But aside from very valuable historical and literary criticism, the relations of the Bible to science, philosophy, psychology, and modern thought in many directions, are intimate and of deep significance. The passing of literalism is causing alarm among a large class of people, who feel that their belief, supposedly settled, is being undermined. Their Bible seems to be losing its authority and sanctity. A great transition is upon us, and nothing can hold it back. The vital problem which demands solution is: How shall popular faith in the

Bible be spiritualized and made more intelligent, rather than weakened or destroyed? Transition periods are always full of unrest and misunderstanding. The incidental iconoclasm which is involved, to the average observer seems like an unhallowed attack upon precious sanctities. Why harrow up the peaceful and complacent surface of religious life and disturb devout confidence which long ago was settled and finished? Only because the soul is constituted for progression and the inner nature cannot be stilled by any surface application, however historic or approved. The conservation of a living faith must find its essential supports in the diviner depths of the soul nature.

This work from an independent standpoint has for its purpose the preservation of all that is intrinsic in the Written Word. It is addressed to the intelligent lay mind, which has neither the time nor training for dealing with the intricacies of technical criticism and spiritual symbolism. "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." The literalism and inerrancy which have been put upon the Bible, under a mistaken obligation of loyalty, are burdensome, and largely obliterate its harmony, beauty, and unity. Thus, the basis has been formed for numerous divisions and rival sects, for under de-

tached textual interpretation each finds its own endorsement. The intellectual form or shell has been grasped instead of the inner verity. The Church has been split into fragments and dogmatized upon non-essentials. Under the confusion of varying polities, and the complexity of ecclesiastical machinery, the essence and vitality has exhaled and escaped. The truth of the Bible, which was originally expressed in warm Oriental symbolism, is marred, or hidden, by its rendering into rigid, cold, and prosaic English. Here is the real cause for most of the prevailing scepticism and agnosticism. The sceptic is as much of a literalist as the extreme orthodox, and his unbelief is the logical outcome. The believer in absolute inerrancy, not only misses the intrinsic treasure of the Bible himself, but he furnishes the weapons for an attack by its opponents.

If the general, even though simple survey of this great subject which is attempted in this volume be of any popular use in the rescue of Scripture from mechanical hardness which largely hides its deeper harmonizing and transforming power, in freeing it from the barnacles which have glued themselves to it, in emancipating it from the unlovely dogmatisms with which it has been identified, in making it more natural and attractive, instead of abnormal and far

away, in interpreting it as a variety in unity, instead of a collection of discordant texts and sayings, in showing inspiration in each part to the degree that it inspires, in recognizing that its divinity comes through man instead of being a projection toward him from without, in discovering the immanence, oneness, and love of God, as well as his formal legality and anthropomorphic kingship — if, in any measure, these principles be made more popularly apparent by the perusal of this volume as one of many auxiliary influences, the author will feel that his effort has not been in vain.

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I

A CONDENSED SURVEY

THERE is a general desire to know the Bible better. In this age of keen and searching inquiry, everything is on trial. Principles, dogmas, and opinions are being tested in real life, and weighed in delicate balances. Nothing is exempt from this sifting process, no, not even the Bible. Sentiment, tradition, and general belief are no longer above question or beyond fair criticism. The demand which is present at every inquest is : What is its merit ? This is the criterion of truth, and determines value. No friend of the Bible need object to the application of this universal test to the Book. Rather he should seek it. Outward authority, sanctity, sentiment, and prestige have changeable values, but merit endures. It would seem therefore, that no apology is necessary for a consideration of the Bible, on its merits. Nothing less can form the real basis for a hearty love and warm appreciation of the Written Word.

In the simplest terms, the Bible is a record of

the spiritual experiences and divine intimacies of gifted and eminent souls. While it contains numerous abstract principles, warnings, and commands, it, more definitely, is a guide to life, through its delineation of numberless experiments in actual living. Its authors, each freighted with some varying influx of divine truth, are scattered like beacon lights along the pathway of human history. They represent the Hebrew race and religion, and later, the rise and spread of a broader and higher manifestation of truth and light in the early distinctive Christian system.

The Old Testament is a selected and vital part of the early Hebrew literature, including the national history of religion, government, ethics, and philosophy. It is the fittest survival of a great mass of the sacred writings of a race in many ways peculiarly favored. But internally it makes no unique claims for itself as a collective unit, for it only became such after a long period of demonstrated quality and superior vitality. The Old Testament represents the heart and soul of the ancient national writings, or, more exactly, their blossoming in the form of literature. Wherein is literature distinguished from writings in general? To rightly deserve the name, it

must be more than a recital of objective and historical facts, more than intellectual information, more than the science, law, or mechanical achievement of the period. It must bear the subjective stamp of humanity, and convey the subtle aroma of the human spirit. It must be exuberant with its current hopes, aspirations, and ideals, and also recount its sufferings and sacrifices. It must teach lessons suffused with life and motive, and appeal to the imaginative nature. It must furnish a comparative mirror for the educational use of other times and races.

To picture in musical verse or rhythm the prevailing spirit and creative imagination of any race or period, is to enshrine it in the most vivid setting. A liberal portion of the Old Testament literature appears in poetic form, and is rich in dramatic quality. Lofty flights of spiritual insight and attainment mark the Psalms, and are rich in the messages of the prophets, in the soul pictures of the epic of Job, and in many other graphic sketches of human expression and practical heroism.

Even the simpler ancient narratives show a purpose more than historic. They teach religious and ethical lessons and inspire confidence in the

divine purpose and dealings. But all these vary with each writer, as age, environment, and temperament are differentiated. Some of the moral and ethical transactions which seem to receive approval, cannot stand in the fuller light of the New Testament and modern standards. The cruel destruction of alien peoples, the occasional revelation of a revengeful spirit, and the maledictions of the imprecatory Psalms must receive emphatic disapproval. The evolutionary progress between the earlier and later Scripture is thus made plain, and the mischievous dogma that the Bible was written, word by word, by divine dictation becomes logically untenable. Both the goodness and the unchangeableness of God would receive a challenge from such an idolatry of the letter. The errancy and fallibility of the human element in the Bible is thereby made certain. That the Old Testament worthies were men not exempt from the passions and mistakes of other men, is abundantly shown, and their history is full of lessons for suggestion and improvement.

The Old Testament is a treatise in moral philosophy, illustrated by pictures of character and circumstance. The steady, unfolding, spiritual sense of a favored people, their experiments, mis-

takes, and disciplinary penalties constitute a peculiar religious system, dramatically presented in human action. Through the sacred literature, the Hebrew race for long centuries was a living and breathing solidarity. It occupied the center of the stage of human development, not only for its own time, but for an educational incentive to subsequent ages. The moral supremacy of the Hebrew monotheism stands out by contrast with the polytheism of the surrounding ethnic systems. But the contemporary religions had their sacred writings, some of them lofty in spirit and aim, and well fitted to their peculiar times and races, and of great service in the moral development of the world. The Vedas, Puranas, Zend Avesta, Upanishads, Koran, Eddas, and many other sacred writings are full of high thoughts and noble utterances. Many of them are poetic in form, idealistic in quality, and spiritually elevating and inspirational. A careful and impartial study of comparative religion plainly shows that many Christian apologists have been unjust in their estimate of other Scriptures, and disparaged them unduly. Many leading ideas in Christian theology, like those of the trinity, sacrifice, atonement, and a corresponding observance of special times and

anniversaries, are found elsewhere, often with such distinctness as to indicate a common origin. Dr. James Freeman Clarke in his notable work, "Ten Great Religions," gives many examples of a striking similarity, from which two selections may be quoted as illustrative. They are from two Babylonian tablets, which contain an account of the Creation.

THE FIRST TABLET

1. When the upper region was not yet called heaven,
2. and the lower region was not yet called earth,
3. and the abyss of Hades had not yet opened its arms,
4. then the chaos of waters gave birth to all of them
5. and the waters were gathered into one place.
6. No men yet dwelt together : no animals yet wandered about :
7. none of the gods had yet been born.
8. Their names were not spoken : their attributes were not known.
9. Then the eldest of the gods
10. Lakhmu and Lakhamu were born
11. and grew up
12. Assur and Kissur were born next
13. and lived through long periods
14. Anu

(The rest of this tablet is missing.)

THE FIFTH TABLET

(This fifth tablet, Dr. Clarke thought very important, because it indicated the origin of the Sabbath in close correspondence with the creative record in the Bible. It is also known that the Babylonians observed the Sabbath with many restrictions.)

1. He constructed dwellings for the great gods.
2. He fixed up constellations, whose figures were like animals.
3. He made the year. Into four quarters he divided it.
4. Twelve months he established, with their constellations three by three.
5. And for the days of the year he appointed festivals.
6. He made dwellings for the planets: for their rising and setting.
7. And that nothing should go amiss, and that the course of none should be retarded,
8. he placed with them the dwellings of Bel and Hea.
9. He opened great gates, on every side:
10. he made strong the portals, on the left hand and on the right.
11. In the center he placed luminaries.
12. The moon he appointed to rule the night
13. and to wander through the night until the dawn of day.
14. Every month without fail he made holy assembly days,

15. In the beginning of the month, at the rising of the night,
16. it shot forth its horns to illuminate the heavens.
17. On the seventh day he appointed a holy day,
18. and to cease from all business he commanded.
19. Then arose the sun in the horizon of heaven in (glory).

But these, and all other creative records which have come to light lack the sublimity, beauty, and coherence of the narrative in Genesis. Notwithstanding the multitude of lofty sentiments in the Scriptures of the ethnic religions, the positive and practical transcendence of the Bible as a guide in human conduct and life is too evident to be brought in question. But we must not be unmindful that Judaism was but a racial system embodied in a national literature, though possessing universal elements and lessons. But its expansive successor, Christianity, burst the bonds of race and nation and developed a positive catholicity.

The Bible is the leading exponent of morals and the higher human attainment. But it does not claim to be a complete and finished revelation. Truth does not originate in its pages, nor gain authority from textual declarations. It eternally existed. The Decalogue was inscribed in man's

nature long before it was graven upon tables of stone. The Written Word has been regarded as a code of divine legislation, or even as the edict of a Monarch, but more truly it is an emancipation. The love of God wrought into the lives of men of old — men like us — through all the lights and shadows of human experience brings out in high relief the ideals to be sought and the mistakes to be avoided in the uneven earthly pilgrimage, over which they passed far in advance of us.

Unchangeable principles are presented in the Book in many forms and guises, but their acceptance comes only in evolutionary order. The ideals which are held up by its many authors, in their successive periods, show a constant advance and uplift. The earlier concepts of God were low and unworthy. Jehovah, the tribal or national deity was only supreme in degree, as compared with the gods of the neighboring peoples. Among many, he towered the highest. In a deep sense each nation made its own ideal and name for the unseen Power, and its concept corresponded with its own state of development. There could be no appreciative capacity beyond. No one can worship the true God, except to the degree that he has the truth and conscious image within himself.

That which every one calls God is but an objective appellation for his own vision, high or low, of the one universal Power, Life, Intelligence, and Will. From the very nature of things he is true or false in the degree of truth or falsity in the worshipper. Startling as it may seem, so far as conscious relation exists on the manward side, each one makes his own God. From the limited, local, and exclusive idea of the Infinite which prevailed during the early stages of the Old Testament literature, there is a constant advance in moral quality, on and up to the lofty concepts which are so richly set forth in the New Testament Scriptures.

The idea of sacrifice as a means of propitiation or appeasement to the deity was a fitting characteristic of all the early religious systems. Such a rite, based upon fear and mystery, clearly reveals the moral status of the gradations at the dawn of the spiritual consciousness.

The evolutionary character of the Bible is also apparent in the very slow unfoldment of ideas of future existence and immortality. While almost entirely lacking, except by feeble implication in the Old Testament, life after death is brought distinctly to the front only in the New. If the Bible, as a completed divine product came directly

from God, it would logically follow that all parts of it should be of equal authority and moral excellence. But if it be a divine message, in and through man, colored by the human medium, it must contain a mingling of the fallible and imperfect. If sunshine passes through colored glass, it is modified in manifestation. How can the finite bring forth pure infinite product? Any "revelation" must be upon the level of the recipient, otherwise it is a vain formality. If there be abundant divine goodness, only human goodness can in any degree interpret it.

Despite temporary interruptions, the great human procession is moving forward by easy stages, and of this general trend, the Bible furnishes an accurate index. Note the great distance traveled between the early sanction of slavery and polygamy and the indiscriminate slaughter of enemies, to the lofty ideals of the Sermon on the Mount, the golden rule, and the fourth Gospel. Is God vacillating and changeable? Then the improvement must have been in men, as reflected in the rising outlooks of their Biblical literature. Man grows just in proportion as his consciousness awakens to his own intrinsic divinity and oneness with his Source. He is slow to discover himself as

a child of God, made in the divine image and likeness.

The Bible is like a great mirror. Objectively the same in motive and mission, each reader catches an aspect and reflection somewhat unique. It has one message but many interpretations, one dramatic story, but both acted and seen by many unlike characters, under all kinds of conditions, fixed in its present objective form, yet always varying in significance, even to the same individual in differing moods and periods. In the final analysis, to the individual, it is his idea of the Book which is the Bible to him. This psychological principle shows why each one of the scores of sects finds its own peculiar creed in the same collective content. Through the use of "proof texts," which constitutes the crowning abuse of the spirit of inspired literature, each finds exactly what it looks for. Even upon the supposition that every word and punctuation mark were of divine origin, the diversity of dogmatic interpretations would not be lessened. Through fitting selections from the Bible, men read themselves into it.

The prevailing view of the Bible has made it rigid and prosaic in form but feeble in practical vitality. A mere intellectual belief and acceptance

can have no power until it is translated into fresh and personal manifestation. Even truth is dead until positively incarnated. Inspiration means in-breathing. God's spirit can be breathed into a living soul, but not into dead things, or parchment, or letters. These may suggest life, but they cannot live.

Turning to the New Testament, its shaping, the selection of its different parts, and its final unification were as unstudied and undesigned as in the case of the older Scriptures. There was no plan, and the writers had no idea of a future formulated and united Book. Spiritual spontaneity only can explain the process and final result. Jesus wrote no treatise for future generations. His teachings were spirit and life and they awakened the divinity in human souls. They were living principles and morally contagious. His message was not a form of law, not freighted with pessimism but glowing with optimism. His words, meagerly reported, through memory and tradition became a growing inspiration, and his followers at length made imperfect records of their substance. As the power of faith and spiritual simplicity in the Primitive Church was gradually replaced by an era of theological speculation, tradition took shape, special

dogmas were formulated, and apologetics multiplied. Great differences of opinion existed as to the relative authority and merit of the sacred writings, but by the close of the second century the Scripture for general use in the churches had substantially been chosen. But still there were some dissensions, and not until the third council of Carthage, at the close of the third century, was the canon confirmed and approved, and handed down to the Western Church.

When the Bible is brought into close contact with the human soul it is able to kindle an inner spirit and life. With many misinterpretations, it yet has been the great organizing and vitalizing force in the higher development of life and conduct. But because of the greatly increased depth and range of modern knowledge, much of the letter would be regarded as mythical, were it not proved that a great mine of meaning and spiritual correspondence lives beneath it. Here is its vital inspirational power. As an analysis of the letter, behold the dry technicality of a Biblical commentary of the former time and type. The pressed and dried leaves of a flower do not reveal its beauty and symmetry. If the Bible is to live, it must live in the soul. There it cannot be a dead letter.

For a simple outline of the wonderful variety in the sacred Book we take the liberty of a quotation from a former work :¹

"The inspired Book is like a vast landscape, rich and varied, both in foreground and perspective. There are majestic mountain peaks whose summits pierce the clouds; peaceful valleys containing green pastures; trees and plants, waving grain and blooming flowers, fruitful gardens and sandy wastes, purling brooks and mighty rivers, lowing herds and gentle flocks, rocks, pitfalls, precipices, fog, sunshine, and shadow. Law, History, Poetry, and Prophecy, in the Old Testament, and the higher ethical and more spiritual teaching in the Gospels and Epistles of the New are mingled in changing proportion in the different periods of the unique history of the Hebrew nation. Upon the surface of this great swift-flowing current are seen the simple dignity of patriarchal and pastoral life, the cruelty of slavery, institutes of priestly orders and sacrificial offerings, the government of judgeship, the authority of kingship, graceful poetry and metrical psalmody, weary ages of captivity, prophetic teaching and warning, Messianic expectancy, fulfillment, tragedy, spiritual baptism, persecution, the planting of churches, and racial dispersion.

"What wonderful life lessons are dramatically portrayed in the symbolical epic of Job; and its impressiveness does not depend upon its historic verity, any more than does the significance of the Parable of the

¹ "God's Image in Man," chapter on "Biblical Revelation," Lee and Shepard, Boston.

Ten Virgins. The Psalms of David, which are full of pictures of ever-changing and diverse spiritual moods, are equally instructive, and true to nature, whether written by the royal Psalmist or by a score of less-known authors. The letters to the seven Churches would have the same applicability if addressed to the churches of the world, as they had to those of a little corner of western Asia. The Sacred Hebrew Writings make up a grand chorus of warning, reproof, discipline, incentive, and inspiration."

II

EDEN AND THE FALL

THE Bible is a wonderful Book because it is full of hidden treasure. The letter of Scripture may be translated from Oriental into Occidental forms of speech, but the rich glow of spiritual truth can be seen and felt only "between the lines," by the inner perception. Its prose, though not rhythmical, is really poetic. So long as rigidity of form, doctrine, and proof texts, as such, are in the mind, the beauty and inner plasticity of the Word is veiled.

The story of Eden, and of Adam and Eve, is a signal example of the wealth of the East in allegory and literary art. One vital truth, however, should be kept constantly in mind. The thing or principle symbolized is always vastly greater than the illustration or symbol. The imagery comes, not to destroy but to fulfill. The figurative words and phrases are only the tools of the artist, and are of no more lasting significance than the painter's brush or the sculptor's chisel. Think

of the generations gone by, who have been taught to venerate the tools which have been placed in front of the divine masterpiece, and have thereby "died without the sight."

Before the full significance of the Edenic narrative can be interpreted, some knowledge of evolutionary and psychological processes is necessary. Creation no longer means something from nothing, but a process of unfoldment and sequence. From the letter of the account, the details are arbitrary and historic, but incoherent. By divine fiat the cosmos springs forth out of nothing. But notwithstanding this superficial appearance, Moses, or other early Biblical writers concerned, had a poetic vision or intuitive perception of the fundamental truth. This clear-sightedness stood in the place of scientific or technical acquirement.

Before taking up the tradition more in detail, we may note the later and broader philosophy of creative development. To some, evolution still means Darwinian materialism, but this has passed as any full and coherent evolutionary statement. Though of great value in its own domain, and as an entering wedge, it is only partial and incomplete. It is to science what literalism is to the

Bible. Only does development become fully rounded and rational when it includes the psychical and spiritual depths of being. Rich ore does not usually lie upon the surface. Philosophical idealism shows the fallacy of the theory that sensation is the basis of all knowledge. Darwin's dictum, that "all potency is contained in matter," has long enough been held up as defining evolution by its dogmatic opponents. Were not Spencer, Drummond, Le Conte, Fisk, and a host of others entitled to be called evolutionists? Spiritual unfoldment, as normal, is as impossible to the materialist as to the dogmatist. The former deals only with the factors of sense, while the latter defines evolution by the same limited standard. "Men of straw" are easily knocked down. Kant gave a finishing touch to the doctrine that sensation forms the complete basis of knowledge, but his wonderful psychological analysis needed the crown and counterpart of the spiritual realm. Every man — and philosophers are no exception — receives his wages in the coin of his own realm. To disconnect matter, mind, and spirit, an essential and interrelated trinity, is to make each fragmentary and misleading.

Evolution when grasped in its full breadth is

the handmaid of religion. Only an exclusive view of its lower side has made it seem atheistic, and like an enemy. On the other hand, an arbitrary religion of dogma, stripped of its vital relation to unfoldment, is equally misleading. If we insist upon breaking the beautiful sphere of truth into fragments, how can they be symmetrical?

The Fall, as an allegorical picture of an evolutionary boundary in human unfoldment, has been dealt with in two previous works by the writer,¹ but the subject is so fundamental that in this connection a concise presentation seems necessary.

Though the creative story shadows forth, in allegory and metaphor, an order of sequence in general accord with modern cosmology, its primal purpose is a portraiture of the nature of man. The curtain is lifted upon the drama of soul unfoldment. We turn outward and gaze into the past, when in reality its acts and scenes are within. It carries a dual significance, including the race, and also each individual unit. As the long physical history of the steps of human development is told again in the gestative processes of the ante-

¹ "The Symphony of Life," chapter "From the Pre-Adamic to the Human," and "God's Image in Man," chapter "Evolution as a Key," both published by Lee and Shepard, Boston.

natal body, so the Adamic nature and experience is evermore repeated. What a convincing proof of the solidarity of the race that its history is re-written in every member. Adam in Eden was a candidate for humanity. In the narrative there are two accounts of the creation of man, which are radically unlike. Rather the first was creating and the second forming. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This is a picture of real man—what he is in essence. In a certain deep sense he was divine and complete from the beginning. God's image could not be essentially imperfect, even though imperfectly manifested. It is the manifestation which perceptibly advances.

The later account, in the second chapter reads: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." The first was man, the child of God, and the second, the outward form. The first was God's likeness, really a part of himself, and the second, man's material instrument or embodiment. Scientific, philosophical, and religious systems, alike, have taken the garment of flesh for the man himself. When this clothing becomes unfit for further service, and is laid aside for new combinations, they say, "man is dead." This

mistake has come down and received general installation. The form of dust represents the common opinion that man has had of himself. Is God made of dust, that it should be his image? Though "a living soul" in reality, when measured by his own consciousness he is an animated form of clay. The one important and all comprehensive lesson in life is the transfer of the self-consciousness from the seeming to the real. That is the "Jacob's ladder" which human understanding is to climb, step by step. All the experiences on this plane of life have this for their ultimate purpose. All the religions and "means of grace" are to this end. What is spiritual is primal, but in expression and consciousness the lower self comes first. The laws of growth, in order to be well understood, must be wrought in by experience. Nothing less than the friction of this educational life will deeply engrave upon human consciousness the one great lesson: I am not what I seem; I am spirit clothed upon.

The divine image is ever back of all degrees of personality which imperfectly represent it. Adam stands for the first and lowest in the order of humanized expression. His name defines a state of consciousness—a mistaking of the shadow for

the substance — and all embodied souls pass through this zone in their development. When pre-Adamic man (man to be) becomes Adam, he enters the rudimentary class in humanity. What a step from the animal soul to the knowledge of good and evil. For the first time there is a glimpse of the moral law which hangs threateningly overhead. Before, he had no aspiration, but now he aims forward at a mark but continually misses it.

The story of human nature in Eden is independent of time, space, or locality. It is a passing vision of the universal order of development. Perfected animalhood can go no further in the Garden, and must emerge with a new faculty into the thorny field of wisdom by experience. The graduate of the lower order steps into the primary department of the higher. Seemingly a fall, really an infinite rise.

It is quite immaterial whether Moses or some other intuitive soul wrote the Edenic allegory. The particular human channel for Truth is incidental, even though the vision be a rare and significant one. We glance at man in the making, with an epitome of cosmic correspondences. Hebrew scholars inform us that that language has

little tense significance. Its verb forms denote state or condition rather than time or circumstance. The translation is simple. Pre-Adamic man was a splendid creature and stood at the apex of his kingdom. With keen senses and fine physique, the color, odor, taste, and feeling of the Edenic paradise ministered to him completely. The Garden represents the utmost luxury and fullness of sensory enjoyment. Its occupant was innocent, irresponsible, and unmoral, being incapable of morality or immorality. His instinct was exact but every rational and spiritual faculty yet was latent. He was the full ripeness of one great evolutionary subdivision and was now ready to cross the line to the next. Behold the Garden with its wealth of delight for every sense! Nothing was wanting and no improvement possible. But at length satiety became ominous. Such was, or is, the Edenic paradise within man. But on an eventful day, the God-voice in the expanding soul became audible. From gestative slumber rationality emerged into the consciousness.

Infantile and stumbling reason now took the helm and mistakes became the rule. What a contrast with former unerring instinct! Trouble and friction everywhere! Was it not a great fall, and

what an apparent basis for the creative tradition ! But in reality, a limited and low-vaulted kingdom was exchanged for one of infinite possibilities. A quick transition, by the telling, but time is but a feeble factor in soul development. Millenniums may be required, merely for crossing a line. Eden was gone forever, but a great residuum of animalism was carried over. Unrest, discontent, the moral law, penalty, a sense of guilt, toil, and sweat, must be faced. How slow the progress and how slight the perception that all the obstacles were —and are to this day— educational advantages ! Spiritual muscle is developed in the exercise of their removal.

Note again the rare and significant symbolism ! Adam and Eve represent the intellectual and the spiritual, the rational and the intuitive, the masculine and the feminine elements in the human soul. These are in all souls, and sex is but superficial, but in general it marks a qualitative predominance of one of them, as indexed by outward expression. Adam came first in order, as the rational faculty being lower in rank comes earlier into manifestation. How true to evolution in the order of unfoldment ! Some have rated the intuition as perfected instinct, or as its survival. But intui-

tion being intelligent, with unlimited possibilities, properly comes after rationality.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the midst of the Garden of the inner self, and the voice, now audible, told man that the penalty for partaking of its fruit — moral discernment — would be death, that is, to his type. Not physical dissolution which already prevailed, but an end to native innocence, animal contentment, and sensuous fullness. The animal, pure and simple, went down. That grade of soul was lost with the discovery "as one of us, to know good and evil," and of a new and higher life. Spiritual perception was a fresh development and involved moral choice by contrast. Man was now to choose between the higher and lower, the lawful and the unlawful, and the seeming and the real. A little later in the narrative, Cain and Abel personify the two states which bring forth fruit in outward expression. The lower appears first in the natural order, but Cain was no longer an animal, for he was conscious of wrong.

To miss the mark (sin) is an experience, which, through penalty, is educational. To learn to choose the higher instead of the lower, constitutes salvation. During the slow unfoldment of the spiritual

soul, struggle, pain, thorns, and thistles of every kind, are rank in the consciousness, and triumph and defeat alternate in the candidate for spiritual and ideal manhood. Life is a series of charges and retreats, but on the whole of increasing advances, at a price which makes spiritual values apparent. The lower is but the soil in which the higher takes root. This growth gains in breadth and grandeur, and comes from adverse conditions, overcome, outgrown, and left behind. The persistence of the substratum of animalism in man is shown by the outcroppings of selfishness, envy, strife, and war, which crowd human history. The animal nature, which was good in its own time, becomes an adversary if it emerges into rule during the human period. After it loses its rightful crown, its new position is only to serve.

Man's choice of the higher must be free, for if he were forced to take the higher road he would become an automaton. To wrestle with that lower selfhood which is typified or personified by the devil, is not only a duty but a privilege. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." (Matthew iv, 1.) "Led up of the Spirit" is significant. The temptation and fasting for forty days is a striking alle-

gory of an inner period of great spiritual and moral development. Every soul has its wilderness. The recorded experience of Job, told in epic form, is a vivid object-lesson of the same principle made intensely dramatic by symbolism.

As the Adamic soul is left behind and the spiritual self becomes dominant, the ego is lifted to a higher outlook. The divine element in man is his Redeemer, his subjective Christ. It is the leaven which leavens the whole lump. All souls are candidates for such an incarnation.

The whole Edenic delineation, including the expulsion and the "flaming sword," is neither meaningless fiction, nor objective history, but a study in evolution, scientific as well as religious. It is a psychological and spiritual drama, put upon the stage and acted before us. The dominant animal makes his final adieu and rationality leaps to the front. The former has served well but now is deposed, while his successor is but an inexperienced child. How weak and helpless the babe of to-day appears when compared with the trained Arabian horse, and yet how far superior in rank, potentiality, and spiritual consciousness! When humanity burst its shell in the animal soul, the nucleus for divine capacity and unbounded ideals

was in evidence. The very wealth of possibilities in store produced immediate discouragement. There was kindled an intense longing utterly incapable of near-by satisfaction. It was a great hunger with but a morsel of bread in sight.

The Eden of sensuous delight was no longer possible, and Adamic man—now human—was forced out, and this by no arbitrary divine ruling, but by the necessity of his own nature. But Eden was still a sweet recollection, and, for the present, what a contrast! While the children of Israel were on their way to the Promised Land, their longing turned back toward “the flesh pots of Egypt.” Many to-day are trying to find the road back to Eden, believing that paradise still lies in that direction. Even awakened souls have some corresponding experience. They are so far behind their own ideals that there is deep discouragement over present attainment. Sometimes we look back to the ignorant innocence of childhood as a kind of Eden, which it well typifies. What a weight of responsibility comes with added years, greater knowledge and awareness of our spiritual potential!

The human mind is filled with new longings and glimpses of lofty ideals. But still man turns his face back toward the Garden-gate, and there

flashes before him the "flame of a sword" which turns every way. He may indulge himself in animalism, but he cannot again be an animal. His dissatisfaction, which is really a hunger for the divine, he cannot interpret. It is impossible to go back, and to go forward means sweat and sorrow. Another paradise, far more pure and beautiful is potential, but it is so far ahead that it is hardly perceptible. The universal trend is forward, and to animalize himself after his rational incarnation is to "kick against the pricks." So the human cannot again go back to the animal, nor the animal to the vegetal, nor the vegetal to the mineral, nor the mineral to the elemental. A flaming sword is everywhere to the rearward and cuts off any retreat over the boundary of each kingdom. A material paradise is no more for human kind, for man is a spiritual being. Man must advance and the rough ground be tilled and cultivated. As a race, and as individuals, we must try not merely to get rid of thorns and thistles, but to transform them. The flaming sword is a provision of divine love. It would be easier for a man to go back to childhood than to parry the sword and scale the walls of the Garden. But even were it possible, the beauty would have dissolved. We

have a universal warrant of progress. The sense of incompleteness as well as the drawing of spiritual ideals urges man onward. The kindly thorns in the rear now guard us against our seeming selves.

In the first chapter of Genesis, the Creator is called God. In the second chapter, divinity is represented in more concrete terms, as acting and having a voice, and is called the "Lord God," or, as rendered in the new American revision, "Jehovah God." It seems reasonable to interpret the latter as the inner voice or spiritual intuition in man. There is much involved in the story of the part taken by the serpent in the temptation. With ancient seers and mystics of the East, the term serpent is much employed in symbolism, and its significance is very elastic. In various ways and relations it may stand either for good or evil in high degree. Says Dr. Brewer in his "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable":

The serpent is emblematical:

(1) Of wisdom. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matt. x, 16.)

(2) Of subtility. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field." (Gen. iii, 1.)

The serpent is symbolical :

(1) Of deity, because, says Plutarch, "It feeds upon its own body ; even so all things spring from God, and will be resolved into deity again."

(2) Of eternity, as a corollary of the former. It is represented as forming a circle and holding its tail in its mouth.


(3) Of renovation. It is said that the serpent, when it is old, has the power of growing young again by casting its slough, which is done by squeezing itself between two rocks.

(4) Of guardian spirits. It was thus employed by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and not unfrequently the figure of a serpent was depicted on their altars.

Among the ancient Greeks serpents were fabled to be able to foresee future events. "Their ears have been serpent-licked," was said of augurs

Besides figuring in Christian art as the tempter in Eden, "the old serpent" is a general name for Satan, or the adversary. In mystic lore the serpent rampant symbolizes the lower human passions, and propensities, while in the form of a ring, with its tail in its mouth, it represented both wisdom and eternity, because eternity has neither beginning nor end.

The account in Genesis clearly makes the serpent symbolic of wisdom, and does not indicate



that it included malignity. In fact, it appears that the prophecy of the serpent as to the result of disobedience turned out to be true. Though it was death to the animal type of being, which was ready to die, "their eyes were opened," and they became as "God, knowing good and evil." This prediction, and its fulfillment, exactly described the great evolutionary transition which was both natural and necessary. Development is couched in spiritual terms. The ultimate end to be worked out by this disobedience was, and is, beneficent. The serpent evidently means mystical wisdom, which, though symbolically personified, came into the mind of Eve, who stands for the intuition or spiritual perception. There was no disobedience to God, the Unchangeable, because the whole transaction was in accord with his law of progress which was eternally ordained. Stated in plain terms the great upward step came from wisdom through Eve, or spiritual insight. This being quicker to perceive than the intellectual — or Adam — leads in the new departure. Though in the order of outward manifestation Adam came first, the intuitive faculty — Eve — outranks him and is the natural leader. "The first shall be last and the last, first."

The voice of warning against the new departure

should not be identified with God, the Creator, as used in the first chapter. It seems to represent the doom of a type — the animal — that was about to lose its supremacy and go down. It was an instinctive cry which was personified to make it more distinct. In an Oriental book, where symbolism makes animals talk, and trees "clap their hands," any great principle might well be represented as having a voice. If you advance so as to discern good and evil, you shall die as a dominant order. You evermore will be subordinate. Without pressing symbolism too far, it seems as if this interpretation, in general, tends to reconcile evolution, religion, science, and psychology. A wholesome "divine discontent" characterizes unfolding spiritual beings, but we may rejoice in being out of and beyond the Garden. Unending aspiration is what is fitting. We should be continually "forgetting the things which are behind." It is unprofitable to look back. The experience of Lot's wife has a wide significance. Life from the lower side is an unending paradox, insoluble until interpreted from the higher point of view.

The ladder, the steps of which stretch up before us, leads from the Adamic to the Christ consciousness. The reactions of life will not permit the soul

to be long inert. Adam is not to be condemned but used as a base. In view of the necessity, orderly place, and potential goodness of the Fall, what a radical mistake to count it as a human calamity! It is an integral part of the divine plan that man should discover the secret of his own being, in order that he may work his way Godward. But it was necessary that he should sojourn in Eden until he came into possession of his spiritual faculties.

Conventional religious systems are based upon the idea of repair instead of development. "The scheme of salvation" was formulated when the Fall was taken to be literal history, and the Garden a spiritual paradise. Dogma pre-supposes "original holiness" and a subsequent failure of God's first plan. Verily, it is literalism and not criticism which unwittingly mars the sacred Book. The implication is that God's work in human creation was so disappointing that Jesus must go between and shield the "image" from him who made it. Is it a wonder that human salvation drags while the Heavenly Father is thrown into an eclipse?

If the church is to "win souls" it must modify its worn-out official formularies and lift its consciousness to the level of truth. The whole story

of the Fall is a beautiful allegory, filled with evolutionary, psychical, and spiritual significance, and it honors the sacred literature. God's plan and work were eternally perfect and needed no repairs or anxious afterthought. It only remains for man to coöperate, looking not backward to the old sensuous Eden, but inward and forward to a spiritual paradise to be set up in the recesses of his own being, or as defined by Jesus: "The kingdom of heaven is within you." If the corner-stone of the former theologies — the repair of a literal Fall — has visibly crumbled, why not find the unchangeable Rock of Truth and build upon that?

III

THE BIBLE AND NATURE

WHEN truly interpreted, the spirit of the Bible is in full accord with the inwardness of Nature. The supernatural is only the higher zone of the natural. God is more directly the Author of the book of Nature than of the Written Word. Nature is sacred, a true Theophany. Her kingdom mingles and coalesces with the domain of spirit. No line can be drawn between them, for truth is not fragmentary, but a rounded unit. If one part be suppressed, and counted as common and secular, the whole is marred.

The Nature-lover — and his name is legion — should not remain color-blind to her spiritual relations and vital unity. His appreciation should not be limited to a delight in graceful forms, colors, perfumes, and visions of sensuous beauty, for these are but outward draperies. The theologian or biblicist who limits the Word of God to one book — a special and unique revelation — fails to find his most vital supports, and misses a wholesome

spontaneity. Special and formal religion cannot longer afford to look askance at natural religion. The natural type is the divine type, for below the surface there is but one.

The general recognition of the divine immanence is a marked characteristic of the closing years of the last century and of the opening of the one just begun. Do the century boundaries respectively mark a new impulse in human progress? A cold intellectuality, mechanical philosophy, and a barren deism prevailed in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth opened with a more poetic spirit, and an increased responsiveness to Nature through human emotion and imagination. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other idealistic souls discovered that God and Nature were not at odds. They kindled some general appreciation of the humanity and sociability of flowers and trees, birds and air, and sky and cloud and sunshine, and of the friendliness of common things and natural beauty. But the more full appreciation of the divine immanence, the responsive springs in the soul of man and the rise of a spiritual optimism was reserved mainly for the century transition of our own time. But the fuller vision is yet limited to a sprinkling of souls of a prophetic cast, who are the heralds of a new

era which shall witness the espousal of Revelation and Nature, religion and science, and spirit and matter.

The subdivisions which men make in their knowledge and research are unnatural and misleading. The domain of Reality is not lined and fenced between the sacred and secular, Biblical revelation and that which is cosmical, or divinity and humanity. Analysis and specialism divide and subdivide, until their votaries can see but little save in one direction. In the physical domain, modern biology discovers that the so-called kingdoms shade into each other. The mineral, vegetal, animal, and human are really progressive relatives. They form a long but symmetrical procession. Lines, angles, and fractions in nature are but superficial or imaginary. But the older thought made the natural and supernatural, the finite and infinite, the human and the divine not only unrelated but in opposition. There was a mutual exclusiveness. God was not in the soul and Nature also was Godless. She was but an infinite mechanism and God was outside and far away. The divine love and goodness was something altogether different from human love and goodness.

Biblical interpretation, either consciously or un-

consciously, is always fitted to the prevailing concepts of the nature and philosophy of the universe of its own time. The old dogmatisms were in accord with the Ptolemaic system of physics and astronomy. Calvin's theology was the fruit of a literalized Bible, and also corresponded with the recognized order of things in the sixteenth century. When his depressing environment is considered with the contemporaneous influences which must have colored his consciousness, he may deserve more commendation than unfavorable criticism. As the truth of the Copernican system was gradually confirmed, the so-called conflict between religion and science became intensified. There was a clash with the letter of Scripture at every point. But now under a symbolic and evolutionary interpretation, the latest and most rational cosmic philosophy is in full accord.

There is a so-called science of Nature which is materialistic, unspiritual, and agnostic in character, but this is evidently diminishing and does not represent the best thought of our own time. The naturalism of the seventeenth century which presented the universe as a cold mechanism and man as an infinitesimal part of the same, continues in the materialism of the present time, though in a

more complex and refined form. It virtually interprets life as a series of physical sensations. But philosophical idealism furnishes a spiritual and religious basis which inspires and uplifts humanity and counts life, not as mere animated matter, but as mind and spirit expressing itself through material phenomena. The term, Nature, should be rescued from a formal, inert heartlessness with which it is associated by certain minds which are pessimistically inclined. Nature, as defined in the realm of sense, is secondary and subordinate to mind. The Divine Mind and Spirit is not Nature, but is within it rather than apart from it. Its processes are the object-lesson of Divinity in outward expression. God is Spirit, and Nature is spiritual.

“ God of the granite and the rose,
Soul of the sparrow and the bee,
The mighty tide of being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee ;
It leaps to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs,
While from creation’s radiant towers
Its glory flames from stars and suns.”

The grand object of life is soul growth. The study of Nature, and of God through Nature, is a

powerful means toward that end. All our environment is crowded with lessons, experiences, and problems for our education and development. Nature is responsive. She is a mirror which sends back truthfully our own reflection. She is filled with traces and symbols of the Divine Mind, and includes the legitimate forces which may lead the soul to gratitude, love, and reverence. Adversity, prosperity, grief and joy, and all the natural experiences of life take man's measure, and furnish a gauge of his progress.

The religion of the Bible is in the highest degree natural. The Sermon on the Mount fits the constitution of man. "Through Nature up to Nature's God," expresses a normal process, a direct highway. The artificiality of religion as presented, and its introduction as an exotic from the outside has drained it of abounding vitality and shriveled its beauty. "Consider the lilies of the field." With man, Nature is a sharer of the One Life which pulsates through all things. She is our relative, even though yet in a lower stage of development. If we make her the depository of the riches of our souls, æsthetic, poetic, and spiritual, she will pay us back in our own coin with compound interest. Her inclusive opportunities,

circumstances, beneficences, and disciplinary experiences may lift us higher, simply by our own permission.

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God :
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.”

The exuberance of spiritual vitality — the divine immanence — translates itself to our senses through forms, colors, and chemistries. As the spirit of Nature and the genius of the Gospel have the same source, they must be in perfect accord when understood. The term, natural, is often used in a misleading sense, as defining what is baser, and as the antithesis of what is spiritual. Thus, St. Paul speaks of the “natural man,” meaning the sensuous or carnal selfhood, in contrast with that which is spiritual and divine. But it is evident that it is not the material organism, *per se*, which is censured, but only its rule and abuse. To be spiritually developed is not to be out of true proportion, but in the highest degree normal and after the divine type.

A rounded spiritual vision should include the inspiration which is found in the Bible, and that which is awakened by the objective universe.

Nature is the larger "Word of God." Its rhythm marks his omnipresent and pulsating life which unfolds every leaf, paints every flower, warms the sunshine, and shimmers in the sea. By a habit which is almost universal, we dwell upon secondary and intermediate things and look upon them as real forces. To delve deeper for what is primary and causative would yield a far richer return, and confer a sense of unity instead of separateness, of harmony rather than discord. Each delightful object in nature is but a letter in the great open volume of the universe. Beauty is more than mechanical regularity, or even symmetry. Things are beautiful in the highest sense only as our consciousness grasps their responsiveness to a spiritual fashioning. The thought of the life and soul of a rose, and of its inner motive and ideal, far transcends its mere color and proportion. It is eloquent as an expression of the beauty of the Divine Mind. And in the deeper analysis, its life and soul is the real rose rather than the material which it has grasped and erected into the graceful form. Who can be an atheist and thereby conclude that the rose grows by chance, or even in consequence of a force or law which is blind? Beauty has an inner meaning and is fitted to human appreciation.

The human soul is thrilled with joy and gladness in the simple recognition of a constant divine manifestation. As our physical organism is directed and molded by the soul within, so is the whole realm of Nature permeated and vitalized by the warmth of Omnipresent Love. The Bible assumes that Nature is its orderly counterpart. They are the internal and external sides of our Revelation. The intimate correspondences and unisons of the noumenal and the phenomenal, of the esoteric and exoteric, of the centre and the circumference, form the gamut of a theme which runs through the whole Bible. Its accompaniment flows through the complicated drama of Job, its theme is woven into the songs of the Psalms, it appears before the glowing vision of the Hebrew prophets, and substantially lives in the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. The poetry and symbolism of the Bible stand out with living meaning to the receptive soul, while literalism withers its spontaneity and vitality. All truths are stays and reinforcements to Truth. To support a noble edifice every column is needed and must occupy its rightful place. The processes, vitality, and evolution in Nature are also as fully recognized in the Written Word as are its beauty and sublimity.

Both are inherent in the soul and in the outer world, and each is necessary to the other. All the voices of Nature and the music of the spheres have a message of Divinity.

“The heavens declare the glory of God ;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language ;
Their voice cannot be heard.
Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.
His going forth is from the end of the heaven,
And his circuit unto the ends of it :
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.
The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul :
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart :
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever :
The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.”

And again in the 104th Psalm, there is a dramatic picture of God in his world :

“Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment ;
who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ;
who maketh the clouds his chariot ; who walketh upon
the wings of the wind :

Who maketh winds his messengers ; his ministers a
flaming fire :

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should
not be moved for ever.

Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture ;
the waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled ; at the voice of thy thunder
they hasted away.

They went up by the mountains, they went down
by the valleys, unto the place which thou hadst founded
for them.

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over ;
that they turn not again to cover the earth.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom
hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy
riches.

Yonder is the sea, great and wide, wherein are things
creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.”

And in the 65th Psalm, the Fatherly benefi-
cence and exuberance :

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ; and thy
paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness : and
the hills are girded with joy.

The pastures are clothed with flocks ; the valleys also are covered over with corn ; they shout for joy, they also sing."

To the inspired vision of the Hebrew prophets, Nature was alive with the divine immanence and was but a thin veil to soften the glory of his Presence. Isaiah, the greatest of the seers, makes her animate and joyous with praise :

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

In the Gospels, Jesus made Nature eloquent in parable, metaphor, and poetic interpretation. The fowls of the air, the lilies of the field, seed-sowing and harvest, the storm, the sea, the sky, the wilderness, the trees of the wood, leaves and fruits, sunshine and tempest, with the whole face of Nature, were standing suggestions and enforcements of truth. The processes of Nature correspond to the developments in the soul, the latter being a higher counterpart.

Advancement in the concept and meaning of Nature from the earlier to the later writings is marked. From the anthropomorphic ideal of God as infinite physical force working the universe from without, to a growing appreciation of Nature as a vast pastoral symphony of praise and rejoicing, and of God as a spiritual indwelling Father, was a great forward movement. With much poetic and dramatic symbolism in the earlier ideals, there was wanting that broader realization of divine love, beauty, and perfect adjustment, with which the truer estimate stirs the soul. Human fellowship with Nature and a translated unity and goodness through her expressions, were not clearly perceived until Jesus brought them to light. Grandeur and sublimity mingled with fearfulness must give place to divine intimacy and intuitive concord.

But the spontaneity and sociability of Nature, as interpreted by the Prophet of Nazareth was destined to become clouded and misinterpreted. Through a dogmatic and literal rendering of the Sacred Writings she at length came to be regarded as cold, prosaic, and gloomy. During the long stagnant era between the days of the Primitive Church and the Renaissance, inspiration through Nature almost ceased. The somber asceticism and formal

austerity, which like a pall wrapped the Middle Ages in gloom, obliterated all the joyousness and friendliness of the visible creation. Nature was unsanctified and unclean. Men everywhere saw their own inward being accursed and dogmatically condemned, and this was naturally reflected back from without. Humanity was in disgrace and beauty in an eclipse. Mistaking the way to become holy, men barred themselves into desolate cells and looked upon bare walls, and put God's green fields out of sight. The Almighty was stern and unlovely, and his works could not be otherwise.

When religion shapes itself into a formal institution, a conventional, prescribed service under ecclesiastical dictation, it becomes rigid in form and feeble in inner potency. Scholastic definitions made by priestly orders and enforced by authoritative ceremonial displace and smother a soulful inspiration and spontaneous vitality.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." Let us climb toward the summits of spiritual aspiration and breathe their pure and invigorating atmosphere. What a narrowing of the great, untiring channel of Revelation to confine it to one book, and to the ancient time! After some revelations to a few devout men,

is it reasonable to think that God withdrew himself and shut off that "Spirit of Truth" which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world"? Has the "still, small voice" been silenced, and is the devout and aspiring soul of to-day, which is receptive to the divine revelation, chronologically too late ever to feel the divine presence? Is there but one "Holy Land," or, rather, is not "every land a Palestine"? Is religion an historic fruit, sealed and preserved in a single receptacle for our spiritual sustenance, or is it a living and abounding perennial? Whichever way we turn, we may see God through the medium of his works. Read the great volume of Nature, solve the problems of history, interpret the significance of events, penetrate to the recesses of the human soul, and everywhere we find the Divine Mind in some form and process of expression.

All divine truth should have a fundamental place in the life, philosophy, and even science of to-day. Materialism has hidden the mainspring of human evolution, and even declares that it does not exist. If we cannot find God in our hearts and homes; if not in the field, forest, and the shimmering sea; if not in the bursting seed and the blooming flower; if not in the busy occupa-

tion and the silent hour ; if not in human experience, somber or bright ; if not in the sweeping current of social and individual life ; if not immanent to-day and here, we may look in vain in the manger at Bethlehem, on the shores of Galilee, or even the hill of Calvary. If we must have miracles of attestation, let us look at the working of divine forces at the present time, as well as those which are embellished by tradition and mysticism. We keep the doors of our own consciousness, and may unwittingly permit eternal life and truth—to be put away on storage—within the precincts of our own souls.

The Word is made flesh. The invisible and spiritual translates itself into the visible and material. Are our eyes keen enough to penetrate the veil, even though it be so thin ? Wherever we find a human soul which breathes forth a divine quality, a book which lifts our thoughts from the mundane to the celestial plane, character which impresses good by simple contact, poetry which kindles aspiration, loving ministry which heals and soothes prevailing woes ; there, in some fitting and peculiar translation is the larger " Word of God."

IV

THE BIBLE AND IDEALISM

THE Bible is a great word-picture in mosaic designs of the Ideal. Its infinite variety of character, history, experience, precept, judgment, and life, under many conditions, have one meaning and converge to unity. From the beginning of the Old Testament to the ending of the New, there is a constant grading upward—terrace above terrace—toward the Absolute. Every inspired writer strives to climb the slope from the lowland actual of his own time and environment, toward the Ideal, and to mark out the path for his generation. His own soul is filled with a radiance which he fain would communicate.

It is a common impression that that which is called ideal, defines not only the unknown but the unreal. But the higher trend of modern thought would identify it as the ultimate real. Perhaps no term has been more abused. It is often employed, not only as the antithesis of reality, but as signifying what is illusive and even

purely visionary. "A barren ideality" is often said of something to express contempt. Eminent makers of fiction, interpreters of ethics, and even of religion, often pride themselves upon their realism. Its thinly concealed definition is materialism rather than that which is truly real. There is a higher thought called idealistic realism. But many will not yet admit that the Ideal is the highest and most deeply real. The abode of conventional realism is within the realm of the physical senses. But validity more correctly belongs to the unseen. Saint Paul affirms that the things which are seen are temporal, while the things which are not seen are eternal. The Ideal is a vision of the Infinite. "The pure in heart shall see God." This is no mere platitude or poetic sentiment, but scientific and psychological truth. We may increasingly feel our superiority over matter, or rather a sense of rule over external conditions. Our ideal is a keen tool, and by its skillful wielding we may carve the surface of outward conditions into high or low relief.

The kingdom is within you, is the recognition and affirmation of the Ideal, by the greatest of idealists. The divine image is there enshrined, but men have but a feeble consciousness of that

supreme fact. It follows that the new education needs to be that of the consciousness as well as the intellect. The Prophet of Nazareth put aside the prevailing forms of worldly wisdom and his teaching was entirely that of inner ideals. His method has puzzled the reformers of all ages. He recognized the inherent power of subjective creations and always began at the centre. He realized the futility of superficial effort and always dealt with the realm of causes, the noumenal rather than the phenomenal.

When human thought and consciousness are lifted higher, outward corresponding expression follows. There are many ideals, but only one Ideal. It is that toward which we are always approaching but never fully reach, the indefinable Ultimate. It is as if everything in the whole cosmos — man included — were not fitted into its normal place, had not yet fulfilled its mission, but were in earnest search for adjustment. The ideal is the universal drawing power. Evolution with its pressure and friction may push from behind, but it lacks gentle persuasiveness.

Our yearnings, our visions, our unsatisfied attempts to peer down the vista of the future all come from our insatiable quest for the perfect.

We often speak of an ideal object, as a picture, statue, or person, in the sense of defining superior merit, but such idealism is only relative. Nothing is ever fully realized. The final completeness recedes and keeps in advance because its mission is to draw and therefore its power is formative. He who holds it is its subject and is being conformed to its own image or likeness. This comes not from any sudden influx but like the rings of growth in a tree. Psychologically considered, the simple contemplation of ideals is helpful.

The whole purpose and trend of the Bible is to hold up the ideals of the spiritual life. It is not to draw attention to itself, but it comes to lift what is in us. It is a service book. It includes material of every kind, negative as well as positive. As the sculptor strives to release the beautiful statue from the block of crude marble within which it is imprisoned, and as the creator of fiction gradually evolves the hero or heroine from unpromising material, so the subjective artist essays to bring his objective activity into more complete conformity to the inner model. Every one has a potential angel within, the release and development of which is a matter of interminable pains and perseverance. The persistence of the divine life in man is accom-

panied by an unending series of lower deaths. Former ideals are cast aside like broken pottery, their life and utility being ended.

The divine in man is the same in essence as God, but his consciousness of the fact is but infantile. It is best so. Man is made for eternal growth. If in due season one ideal were not replaced by a larger one, it would mean stagnation, even for an archangel. The poet often sings of eternal rest, but passive idleness is not human. Absolute contentment is abnormal. A certain "divine dissatisfaction" insures perpetual growth. The light which has been kindled in the soul is never to be extinguished.

The Ideal is that intangible truth and reality for which man hungers and thirsts. He fails to interpret his own restlessness. He is delving among lower models while he encloses the higher. Disappointment will continue until the loftier is sought out and awakened. Order is not found in things but must be set up in one's own soul.

Human life on the present plane consciously begins with simple physical sensation. The individual is a bundle of unending possibilities, attainable only by an ever-increasing proportion of the spiritual, as compared with the sense consciousness. From the early base of material sensation, the soul is ever

making experimental and educational excursions, higher, and yet higher. But that is only the training of what has been implicit from the beginning. To go upward is to go within. The soul which is bruised and depressed by rough contact with the world may retire within itself to the divine centre and commune with the indwelling God. There, and there alone, it can sit face to face with the Ideal and have a vision of perfect love and spiritual freedom. "Men may rise upon the stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." One finds satisfaction only as by aspiration he surpasses himself.

The soul has true creative power. It is always making itself over, and virtually makes its own objective world. The same material environment, to different observers, may be bright or dark, in fact, living or paralyzed. The difference is due to varying inner reflection or re-formation. Aspiration may become a cultivated habit. In the corridors of the soul the ego can set up statues or hang pictures of its own designing. There they seem to breathe and live. The potential artistic power has no limit. The technique of the professional designer may wane, but the skill of the unseen genius increases.

The Bible, under a spiritual interpretation, points toward the Ideal. Scholastic dogmatism renders the book dry and unattractive. The realism of the letter hides its inner light. In order that the fine gold of its ideals may be assimilated and transmuted into living spiritual manifestation, they are presented in a great variety of combinations and conditions, shown at all angles and in different lights, and tested in their adaptation to unlike ages, races, nations, and forms of government. Through them the divine principle flows into the lives of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, high and low, and its quality is exhibited in all stages of progress, from the tender shoot to full maturity. Its molding power touches life on every side. Emerson wisely says that, "A man is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world."

Who can fully define the Ideal? Shall its absolute and relative elements be love, goodness, truth, and beauty? All. The divine perfection is wholly inclusive, a rounded sphere. While the Ideal abstractly is perfection, the human aspect must ever remain relative. Though the Abstract is unknowable and unattainable, its influence upon life is all important. The dominant element in the

ultimate Pattern is love — love universal. But this encloses a noble group of subordinates. Love includes and energizes beauty, truth, and goodness. Beauty is more than shapely form and symmetrical proportion. It is the spirit of harmony in expression. It grasps inharmony, recreates and idealizes it, possesses it with order and fills it with soul. Again we are brought back to the subjective. Beauty is a reflection of what is in the beholder, hence it is primarily a soul quality. Even art cannot be objective for all outward beauty is only a work of art. Different observers may clothe the same graceful statue with purity or voluptuousness.

Truth is the ideal of conformity to law, the normal type. When the soul has realized the truth of nature and art, it is their conqueror. The love of right, justice or sincerity is both instinctive and an inspiration. "Man was made to look upward," says that delightful modern mystic, Maeterlinck :

"We all live in the sublime. Where else can we live? That is the only place of life. And if aught be lacking, it is not the chance of living in heaven, rather is it watchfulness and meditation ; also, perhaps, a little ecstasy of the soul. Though you have but a little room, do you fancy that God is not there too, and that it is impossible to live there, in a life that shall be

somewhat lofty? If you complain of being alone, of the absence of events, of loving no one and being unloved, do you think that the words are true? . . . All that happens to us is divinely great, and we are always in the center of a great world."

The Ideal which dwells in the soul is the thought of oneness with divinity, a native attraction of a man towards his Source, a coherent aspiration Godward. The ultimate and highest Good is an eternal magnet—that totality of all moral and spiritual completeness which defines the Eternal Spirit.

The ideal of the divine in human form we call the Incarnation. It is the conjunction of the two which become one, made materially manifest. The one supreme fact thus named gains its significance because it testifies of a universal law. It is not abnormal or super-normal, but a natural development. The ideal of the rose is to blossom, and incarnation is the fulfillment of destiny. Every law, by correspondence, has application up and down, as well as upon its own plane. There is a spiritual, as well as material gravitation, and the tides of high life are as well defined as those of the great deep. The life of nature as well as inspiration in man, moves towards an ideal.

"In buds upon some Aaron's rod
The childlike ancient saw his God ;
Less credulous, more believing, we
Read in the grass — Divinity.

"From Horeb's bush the Presence spoke
To earlier faiths and simpler folk ;
But now each bush that sweeps our fence
Flames with the Awful Immanence !"

What a costly mistake has been the substantial isolation of Jesus! Such was not his purpose. The Christ consciousness has often been introduced as a formal stranger. Man has been authoritatively proclaimed as incapable and depraved. Thus the mirror-like normal Model which he has held before himself, has been marred.

Truth, in fact, is inoperative until it is vivified into an ideal. Then it lives. It matters little, as a fact, or event, whether or not William Tell ever existed. But the heroic virtue and patriotism enclosed in the story has ever been a molding force in Swiss character and in a general love of liberty. The ideal outweighs a thousand events. History is meaningless unless it lives. "Let the dead bury their dead." There is much evidence that the thought of a Western Continent loomed strongly in the European consciousness before

Columbus actualized the fact. The ideal preceded and projected the event. Do not hide the ideal behind dry and superficial happenings but burnish it and bear it aloft. Let every one mark deeply his specification, and conformity to the drawing will increase. A corresponding law lives and moves upon the physical plane of expression.

The relative value between circumstance and law is especially marked in the biblical literature. A bare historic episode may be one of many expressions of truth, but, of itself, it is too narrow to sustain the full superstructure. A vital principle must also root in the living present. The spiritual marrow of the Bible is mostly contained in poetic and idealistic form rather than in letter and history. It may be that "facts are stubborn things," but often they are dead and dry barriers — precedents in the path of progress. How the flowing imagery of many of the psalms uplifts and inspires! Modern indifference to the Bible is largely the result of an undue emphasis which has been placed upon occurrences whether true or uncertain. Inspired truth inspires. There is a strange inclination to burrow near the surface rather than delve for ultimates. The unsatisfactory nature of conventions and ready-made ruts is evident, for spiri-

tual verity is original and spontaneous in the soul.
"The truth shall make you free."

Ideals project themselves across the vista of the future. The soul must look forward. While the lessons of the past may be profitable for reproof and educational discipline, they are but auxiliary. History is full of tethering-posts to which truth has been tied and obstructed. The low-vaulted past is not inspirational, though it furnishes the kindling which, when ignited, lights up the forward highway. What we have suffered and survived is consumed in the furnace of life in order that its energy may be transmuted into spiritual newness and vigor. Let us smile upon the coming time and it will respond with a greeting to us. If the body gives signs of infirmity let us not forget that we are not bodies, but unfolding souls. The youthful and optimistic temper will not permit mental rigidity, spiritual lethargy, or a religion of exclusion.

Never before in the world's history was there so clear an understanding of human inspiration. With research penetrating unwonted fields, with knowledge marvelously expansive, with philanthropy more scientific and practical, and with hopefulness systematically cultivated, we hail the new time with joyful anticipation. We may pitch

a tent for a night in the field of retrospection but do not let us make it a residence. Learning as we do through contrast, the very mistakes of former years should lend a new impetus to our advance. The man of to-day is great in proportion to the obstacles which he has overcome. Jacob, with a strained thigh, wrestled all night with the adversary and became a new man and was given a new name. He who has little faith in himself is likely to have but a feeble faith in God. The divine indwelling is the supreme and only remedy for the ills of life. Paul was a true idealist: "Rejoice alway. . . . In everything give thanks." Such a spirit transforms tribulation, sweeps away pessimism and makes the world over. The "new heaven and new earth" are ideals capable of realization. As "Alps on Alps arise," so summit after summit of spiritual attainment lifts its head before us, and each furnishes a vantage ground for a victory over the next.

To be, forms the basis of to do. While the seer, to our minds, is mainly associated with the ancient time, he is more than ever needed to-day. Said Archimedes of ancient Syracuse: "Give me a fulcrum on which to rest and I will move the earth." But Emerson, the modern idealist, found

a fulcrum to move a greater world than that of matter.

The Bible, as a great living unity in variety, seeks to enthrone the Ideal in man. In one of our former books¹ a brief enumeration of some of the idealistic elements of the sacred Scriptures was made for which liberty is taken in their quotation.

“The Inspired Book touches every life in its full breadth and at every point. That supreme spiritual aspiration and God-consciousness that illumined men of old will inspire men of to-day. Those great divine sources and springs have not lost their power to kindle new life. The history of the Jewish nation is a grand drama, the ever-shifting scenes of which portray vice and virtue worked out in character and life, each to its legitimate result. With natural, free interpretation of the Book, its light will grow clearer and broader, and it will be an ever-unfolding source of inspiration to human life.”

The Bible is instinct with the idealism of the ancient time. Each successive generation catches its living glow anew. Its truth is old, yet ever new. Its inner significance expands under new conditions and combinations. Changing applications and adjustments take place, but its beams of light will continue to shine on generations yet unborn.

¹ “God’s Image in Man,” Lee and Shepard, Boston.

Those things which have served their purpose make the soil for new planting. As the mists of early morn dissolve and disappear when the sun arises, so the modern atmosphere wipes out dogmatism and scholastic self-sufficiency. There is a subtle integration and disintegration active at the same time. The traditionalist feels that the very foundation stones are crumbling, while those which are to replace them are not yet evident to him. But be courageous, for while the old is slipping away, there is growing in human consciousness a greater faith, a grander religion, and a mystic revelation of the Ideal. He who has been content with the theory of an occasional interposition of the infinite hand of a far-away Deity, may awaken and find himself in a beautiful and orderly universe, with the sense of the Immanent One within himself. Reverently speaking, God is brought home. What a discovery and inspiration in such a transition! As Mont Blanc towers up above the horizon to the approaching traveler grand and indescribable, so the Ideal lifts its symmetrical and awe-inspiring proportions to thrill his being. It is not isolated, but all-inclusive. The explorer finds himself in a social universe where everybody and everything is his relative. Instead

of separation there comes a new sense of unity and universal friendliness. He finds even that every throb of pain, every heavy cross, every frown of fate, and every pathetic event, has some educational and beneficent fruit. It fits into a larger and even a universal plan. Even so-called death is but a new birth into higher life and larger opportunity. Out of the cruder expression grows one more sublimated, refined, and glorious. But the Ideal makes its presence felt only to him who opens his eyes.

Idealism is scientific in a true sense. Truth is an all-inclusive unit, and science, or exact truth, cannot be fenced off and limited to the material realm. There can be no higher proof of any principle than that it fits the constitution of man. He is the universal unit of measure. If a proposition is adjusted to the soul and satisfies every craving, it cannot be false. Even the nature of divinity is to be gauged by humanity. There is a rapid trend in science from materialism toward spiritual refinement. As accurate research digs deeper, evidences of design and unity are multiplied. The analytical by-paths in all directions finally converge toward a grand synthesis. Every discovery and development lends additional proof to the proposi-

tion that what should be, is. By such an assumption, Laplace worked out the elimination of what had been regarded as the uncertainties and irregularities of the solar system. The hypothesis of what is ideal prepares and points out the way to the scientific actual. Science may be defined as demonstration. It is the ideal coming into appearance. In the mind it is the instinctive recognition of truth. Not merely one Word, but every word is made flesh. Real construction is from mind stuff rather than material protoplasm. The truth we have with us, but the greater truth is always a little in advance. If the shepherds of Chaldea saw a near-by star which told a story, how much greater the wonder which confronts the modern astronomer in the nightly starry host his camera registers and which he catalogues.

There are ideals for the race, nation, and world, as well as for the individual. They have transforming and molding power. Note one or two specimens of the many in the Bible. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Micah iv, 3) "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie

down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah xi, 6-9) "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians iv, 8) Such ideals cannot be too often repeated. Psychologically, they are kept bright and prominent by reiteration. The Pattern, when steadily held aloft, glows before the mind like a beacon light. If one fully occupy himself with the good, evil at length becomes a negation. As positive reality lights up the soul, the negative shadows dissolve to their native nothingness.

The goal for the individual soul is the higher

or spiritual consciousness. The term "cosmic consciousness" is one which some have recently employed to represent the supreme Ideal, and it is very suggestive. It signifies the recognition not merely of a material order but of a spiritual totality. The fragmentary things of life and of the universe are rejoined and repaired, the fogs and shadows dissolve, and the rough places are made smooth. It is an intelligently cultivated feeling — nay, vision — not merely of nature and mass, but of a cosmos of Mind, Spirit, and Love. It involves soul responsiveness to the largest and highest environment. Divinity is our own. Through oneness and receptivity, we let it print itself upon us.

V

BIBLICAL POETRY AND FICTION

ANY revelation, to be a real revelation, must be adapted to the inner conditions of the recipient. Blot out what is poetic and imaginative from living literature, and the more inspirational and soul-moving part would be gone. These forms of writing have a warmth and depth of appeal unequaled by what is prosaic, and must be regarded as effective vehicles for religious truth. It is inherently impossible for a mind of plain severity to assimilate the divine exaggerations of the poet, or to enter his rich creative realm. Some careful observers think it a matter of doubt whether it is possible for the Occidental mind ever to fully comprehend the Oriental, and we should remember that the Bible is wholly a Book of the East.

Not merely great learning, but nothing less than the cultivated imagination is well equipped to sift the divine precious metal from the human dross which ages of ignorance and credulity have fastened upon the Scriptures. The

destructive literalism, which the stern but conscientious orthodox believer reads into the Word, is found quite as often and as strong among his prosaic destructive critics. Though radically in opposition, at this point they agree. Scepticism and even atheism is largely caused by the positive lack of the poetic imagination which is so exuberant in Holy Writ.

If there be some reluctance to the admission of the value of poetic form as a channel for Scriptural truth, what shall be expected of the fictional, which, in reality, is one of the most effective means it is possible to employ? It is not its mission to mystify or exaggerate, but to awaken and interest. If it does not light up the plain substance of what is real, it does not serve its purpose. The most fertile domain of the soul is that of the emotional nature.

Our Western temperament of sharp outline cannot well appreciate the necessity of the more fanciful or figurative method of teaching, and that imaginary stories, or fables, often bring home the most weighty principles. The parable, which was one of the most telling of the methods employed by Jesus, under literary classification belongs in the department of fiction. The instru-

ments to reach the heart of man need to be fitted to his most favoring approaches.

The poetry of the Western World has two leading forms of expression which are known as rhyme and metre. Without at least one of these we do not distinguish it as poetry. But Hebrew scholars assure us that the range of the poetry of that language is vastly wider. It possesses a subtle and graceful rhythm, but neither rhyme nor metre is essential. Syllabic correspondence and measurement for distinctive poetry were not essential to the Hebrew ear. In the deeper sense that which is truly poetic depends not upon verbal uniformity, but proportion of the romantic and idealistic quality. It is the subtle designing of the imaginative faculty which introduces its subject most deeply into truth and the divine mysteries. It is the charming office of poetic art to paint symmetrical pictures in the mind, and these are often far more truly educational than any bald presentation of logical truth. There is a dramatic atmosphere to that which is imaginative, which invests the plain substance of principle and makes it live before the soul.

How uplifting and inspiring the poem of the Twenty-third Psalm, and yet as measured by

prosaism, how little of it is strictly true! The whole book of Psalms is inherently a series of graphic sketches, deftly drawn, and rich in fancy, and the Proverbs and Job are exuberant in imaginative light and shade. Many other biblical books also contain songs, reveries, visions, rhapsodies, and flowers of speech. Both the major and minor prophets often break forth into poetic and exultant strains and give full rein to what a sober realist might call extravagance. The great lesson which the Occidental Christian needs to learn from Eastern sacred lore is enthusiasm, and not much less, spiritual entertainment. The logical doctrinaire, dealing with hard fact and sharp discrimination, should become more plastic and responsive. The man of the West puts little warm devotion into his religion, and gets no great joy out of it. It is vastly more of a duty than privilege. If the spiritual and religious stratum in man be the highest in his constitution, it should be the seat of the play of his finest soul forces.

Must the drama, the most powerful of all teachers, be forever confined to what is frivolous, or at the best, only of the material order? What a field, almost wholly unoccupied, for a higher creative art! The unsatisfied spiritual hunger

for inspirational and dramatic activity of a lofty quality, is the direct cause of occasional outbreaks of fanaticism. The poetic fancy of men demands an outlet, and if that of the higher order be suppressed, it will burst forth in low and illegitimate forms. It is beginning to be widely recognized that if the Church is to increase or even hold its present influence, it must absorb and utilize many forces which it has discouraged or barred out. The human consciousness can no longer occupy a compartment by itself. The drama is the natural kindergarten for the adult, and human nature is so insistent upon its visible exercise that it will take realism from below, if denied the idealism of a purer atmosphere.

In the King James version of the Bible the text of the poetry of the Bible is all printed in the prosaic form, so that there is no outward mark of difference for the indiscriminative reader. But in the English version of 1884, and in the new American standard version, published in 1901, the Books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Song of Solomon are rendered in modern poetic form. The same is also true in occasional outbursts of a similar spirit in other Books, an example of which may be noted in Isaiah, chap. xxxviii. Dr. A. W. Hitchcock, in

his very valuable work upon the Bible, says, regarding Hebrew poetry :

“ It is the reflection of inner states, and of the effect which nature and experience have upon the soul. It is subjective rather than objective and didactic, lyric rather than descriptive or dramatic. . . . Mind and matter, brought together, produce philosophy ; fancy and matter, invention ; muscle and matter, labor ; spirit and matter, religious expression such as we have in the Old Testament. The Hebrews were not philosophers, nor inventors, nor toilers, but they could not help expressing themselves in the Psalms.”

The narrative of the Creation in Genesis may be designated as a pictorial imaginative sketch of the harmony, mystery, and divine completeness of the Eternal Intelligence. Its purpose is not to inform the understanding or impart cosmic knowledge, but to inspire and uplift the soul. Poetry need not be regarded as ornamental or embellished literature, but as inner truth expressed in artistic form. It appeals to the feelings of the heart rather than the reason of the head. It is spiritual experience cast in emotional or recitative measure. The prevalent almost unconscious translation of the poetry of the Bible into hard fact or “frozen truth” has been very harmful to its usefulness and right interpretation.

A good example of Oriental teaching through imagination of the fictional variety is found in the Book of Judges (ix, 8-15).

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.”

A strong simile of the varieties of human character, of current events of the time, and prophetic of their outcome.

The Book of Jonah is undoubtedly fable rather than history. Whether or not the brief story has any historic background, the main purpose — the teaching of great moral principles through hyperbole — is entirely evident. Through an imagina-

tive story, it is graphically taught that the clear call of duty cannot be evaded or left behind with impunity. When the "word of the Lord" comes distinctly to us, demanding active conformity, it is in vain that we flee away. An attempt to evade the divine obligation is tantamount to absolute denial. Anger and selfishness also receive a stern rebuke from the voice of God in the soul. The story is not that of the strange adventures of a man, but of the varying impulses of the heart. All phases of character are brought into a focus of light by the dramatic handling of imaginative material.

To interest and arouse the childlike temperament of the Eastern races, the picturesque method of teaching is indispensable. Dr. K. C. Anderson, in his most valuable and interesting work, "The Larger Faith," observes :

"What we are to see in the narratives of the Nativity is the religious imagination of the first Christians endeavoring to construct for their already idealized Messiah a fitting dramatic entrance into the world. To suppose that angels literally articulated to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem that the Messiah had been that day born, that the heavens were literally opened, disclosing a multitude of the heavenly host, and that there was literally sung, audible to outward

ears, the words of the Christian anthem, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men,' is to take all poetry out of the exquisite narratives, and to lose the fine spiritual truth which comes home to the imagination and heart of man. Not only is it not true that to make these narratives the poetical vestments of sublime truths is to reject them as worthless, it is only when we cease to regard them as bald statements of outward facts, and treat them as poetry, as drama, that we preserve them for religious use. For historical criticism will continually protest against the former interpretation, and the common sense of men will continually reject it. The account of the star — wonderful, mystical — of the wise men traveling far from the east, of the angels looking down from heaven and singing wondrous songs, is not history, but poetry."

The imagination is the great inspiration of life and takes hold of things unseen and eternal, while formal fact and logic meet with a much feebler response in man. The absence of faith and optimism in moral and spiritual things is a radical limitation. No "day of Pentecost" could ever be the result of mere prosaic statements, even though they be facts. The ideal must be in advance of present realization. The creative and soul-moving forces of religion reside in the beatific zone of consciousness. Some philosopher has said: "Let me make the songs of a nation and I care not who makes

its laws." The Christian consciousness far transcends the influence of the historic confession. Hymnology, whether pure or faulty, has done far more in shaping religious belief than the whole consensus of theological dogmas. In the great evangelistic tours of Moody and Sankey through the English-speaking world it is probable that the service of song, in its power upon men, far outweighed that which came from exhortation. The great anthems, oratorios, chorals, and even the single voice—each at favoring times and seasons has melted the hearts of multitudes. Scores of thousands were enraptured and uplifted beyond measure by hearing the greatest of modern vocalists sing, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Eloquence and the art of oratory, even when not directly exercised upon poetic themes are essentially poetic in their nature. Why are they so little in evidence in the modern presentation of the gospel? Doubtless the prosaic and materialistic trend in life is so general that a greater degree of feeling and Oriental method would seem to be out of accord. How few in the modern ministry read the Bible in public with power! A clear and finely modulated voice is almost a poem in itself. The truth needs more eloquent

and fluent presentation, and it is to be hoped that the decline in oratory may be arrested. Expressive delivery with the charm of intonation, gesture, and impressiveness should be revived, for these are far more important than theological scholasticism. The genius who has the imaginative art to light up truth and paint it in attractive garb possesses a molding power upon the hearts of mankind to which the distinctive logician cannot aspire. The Christianity of bare bald doctrine may exist but must struggle to live.

Intellectual self-sufficiency disparages the intuitive faculty, and sometimes even denies it a place. Applying this discrimination to the doctrine of the Resurrection, a very prominent clergyman has well observed: "If the resurrection of Jesus is made so material and historic as to eclipse the spiritual Jesus (Christ), if he is made so local and temporal as to be a mere idol of the ever-living and ever-present Emanuel, there is religious decadence and not progress." If the human soul is to be "saved," those who are to engage in the work first of all should study its approaches, its features, its methods, and the kindling of its native forces, instead of directing their attention almost wholly to objective fact and dogma. An engine may be

never so perfect in every detail, but until the steam is applied in conformity with its own working laws it is as useless as so much junk.

To consider the stories of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, the Deluge, and Noah and the Ark, as legendary, symbolic, or even mythical, gaining through them a higher interpretation, is not to disparage the Bible but to honor and illuminate it. No enemy of the Scripture and the true gospel could damage them more than their avowed friends who mistake the poetic and imaginative method of teaching for the hard outline of truth.

If the "Word of God" is to flow into souls and shape itself to their vacancies and needs, it must be rendered in plastic rather than rigid form. The very primal purpose of divine truth is to fit itself to man, and it is spiritual tragedy to crowd upon him that which he cannot assimilate. The great variety of literary style and the diversity of light and shade combine to give it a unique charm. Its grand truths are rendered variously adaptable and graphic through poetry, fiction, hyperbole, sarcasm, metaphor, and anecdote.

The writers who have most influenced the world, whether biblical or otherwise, are those who have been profoundly imaginative. They are not dreamy

or impractical souls but of creative ability and useful activity. They point out not only underlying laws, but also have glimpses of the ideal and perfect in the ultimate meaning of things. The work of the imagination, well done, is true art. There is unity, harmony, and proportion of detail, and the summing up is beauty. The Bible is a Book of spiritual inspiration and delight. It presents a kaleidoscopic vision of life, and its pattern "in the Mount" serves as a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. The imagination is preëminently a religious faculty, but how largely in practice it is relegated to a lower range! Strip prosaism from life and the Bible, and their inherent charms will draw all men and win their hearts.

"I slept, and dreamed that Life was Beauty,
I woke, and found that Life was Duty.
Was my dream, then, a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream shall be
A noon-day light and truth to thee."

VI

THE MIRACULOUS AND THE SUPERNATURAL

THE miraculous and supernatural, as descriptive of events, and as terms of classification, are each used with distinct and differing definition. Further misapprehension is often added by their interchangeable employment. Much disagreement naturally results which would be preventable if men took more care to understand each other accurately. What is a miracle? From the simplest definition of the word, only a wonder, that which is strange or unusual to the observer. But as specifically used, it formerly conveyed the idea of some occurrence which is a result of direct divine interposition, and which is above or beyond the domain of orderly law. Although such a significance is rapidly diminishing, it still lingers as a sentiment in many minds.

What is the supernatural? In reality only the higher zone of the natural; that which belongs to a more subtle and refined realm, but yet which is as

normal as that which is subordinate. It properly includes that part of the great Whole which is spiritual and unseen. In rank and relation it is above materiality. The supernatural — above the natural — depends upon what is meant by the natural. It is unfortunate for the cause of truth, and clear thinking, that the term, natural, has become limited to the realm of matter. We hear of the natural world in contrast with the spiritual world, and of the natural man as opposed to the spiritual man. But neither the spiritual world nor the spiritual man is unnatural. If the term natural were used only to signify normality, confusion would be avoided. But prevailing dualistic thought has not only divided the great unity into two sections, but it has set them in opposition. The material and the spiritual are not rivals but varying manifestations. Being divinely joined they should not be rent asunder.

Religion has been defined as "a plan of salvation," a system of repair, supernatural in its character and attested by miracles. These have been taken as the proofs of its divinity and genuineness. As performed by Jesus and his followers, they were regarded as certificates from above, or seals that their teachings were more than human. Who

would believe without the witness of something miraculous? "Show us a sign from heaven," has always been the human demand. Through the ages it has been assumed that Christianity and miracles were interdependent and stood or fell together. Said Lowell, in writing of the unreasonable requisition for signs :

"O Power, more near my life than life itself!
I fear not Thy withdrawal ; more I fear,
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou
Walking Thy garden still, commun'st with men,
Missed in the commonplace of miracle."

The universality of law is the climax of all modern discovery. Here and there, farther back, some rare prophetic soul has had a vision of an orderly nature of things, and such a one was Richard Hooker who lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century. In beautiful form, no less profoundly scientific than poetic, he wrote :

"Of Law, there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power."

The great principle that there is an orderly administration of the universe — reliable and un-

varying in every detail—has been the general foundation for all the wonders of modern progress. Every one of the numberless concrete inventions and each application of nature's forces, and, no less, new recognitions of moral and spiritual truth which have enlightened and uplifted mankind, have their roots in the knowledge of the unfailing regularity of the divine order.

If any wonderful work has ever been performed contrary to orderly law, then God must be capricious and the moral order disorderly. But many marvelous transactions have taken place in accord with laws with which we have been, and still are, unacquainted. Such an administration is reasonable, and confirmed in every direction; and it is entirely unlike the dogma, so long and universally held, that miracles are special and unique and given as signs. Great changes in opinion have taken place, but the newer and larger views, as yet, are held by many but tentatively. But every manifestation in the whole material and spiritual cosmos, as at present interpreted by the scientific method, is subject to immutable law which is immanent. The Divine Mind and Life—the one ultimate Force—expresses itself through resident causation and sequence, and is an endless chain with no

link missing. What a burden upon faith, and its hospitable reception, is the belief of a spasmodic interference at human request, by God with his own beautiful and eternally established methods ! The apologists of the past have marred the religion which they earnestly endeavored to explain and defend.

But on the other hand, we should not dogmatically deny the occurrence of many unusual things that are said to have happened, because we are yet unaware of the laws through which they were possible. We have as yet explored and mapped out but a mere fraction of the universal order, and must beware of fixing its limits in any direction. Deeper research will yet disclose an unbounded realm of natural law stretching out over the physical, the psychical and spiritual universe as well. The next great step will be toward a more general recognition of the latter as well as the former. How many have yet fathomed the tremendous possibilities of mind and soul working in coöperative harmony with the Divine Mind ? How many have yet touched the mere fringe of the phenomena of spiritual healing, suggestion, faith, telepathy, visions, trances, and obsessions ? There is truth in every realm which has some fitting and beneficent use.

In proportion as man becomes acquainted with divine method and his own hidden forces, he will wield numerous powers which are yet unrecognized and idle. The violation of those laws which are unknown, as well as those which are known, is subject to penalty.

Who can pronounce judgment upon the miraculous occurrences which are on record in the Bible? It would seem that there are two classes of minds which are incompetent in that direction. First, those who literalize, and believe in special divine intervention. The other class, which is as illy equipped to deal with the miraculous, includes those who at once deny the validity or historical accuracy of any unusual event or condition, because it transcends their own scanty knowledge of law, and is contrary to their own limited experience. Here are two opposing and extreme forms of dogmatism, and it is not easy to decide which is more unprofitable. The first shows an ignorant and credulous faith which is not according to knowledge, and the second a blind unbelief and materialism which perhaps is more barren and depressing than the surplus of superstition.

Any study of the supernatural elements of the Bible from the cold and matter-of-fact standpoint

of to-day, must be inaccurate and superficial. The ancient Hebrews were indeed "a peculiar people." They were not only superior, as related to the surrounding nations, in their devotion to monotheism, the worship of Jehovah, and through their gifted seers and leaders, to an unusual ethical and spiritual perception, but also in their remarkable development in mysticism, occultism, and psychology, theoretical and practical. The strange phenomena of mind and spirit, which have little attention and which interest but a few at the present time, formed a great leading pursuit and interest of life. In this they were not unlike the surrounding peoples, except that their visions, wonders, and other psychical experiences were purer and more distinctively spiritual than the prevailing occultism of the time. Such things were then universal. Intercourse with the subjective, and the unseen objective, was sought and cultivated. Visions, magic, demonism, clairvoyance, witchcraft, and marvels were common, and of all grades in moral quality. Forces, which to the modern Occidental consciousness seem weird, and, with many, absolutely unreal, to them were so general as to be almost axiomatic. The "wise men" of the ancient time were not educated in the modern sense, but were magicians in

various orders of higher or lower degree. Signs and wonders mainly made up the ancient curriculum. Few conventional readers of the Bible appreciate how fully it is crowded with mysticism and occultism, and that fact makes it seem to the average reader a far-away book. In the human consciousness of to-day it has been detached from real life. Spiritual forces have come to seem nominal and even unreal, instead of substantial, and closely correlated to those of the material realm.

Both in the Old and New Testaments, there is recorded a constant series of "miracles," greatly unlike in moral quality, and in reasonableness as compared with the usual order of nature. Some of them seem beneficent, some cruel, some literally probable, and some impossible. How has the sceptic, and he who would be a destroyer of the Bible, poured contempt upon the Book because the literalist has felt it incumbent upon him to stand up for the historical accuracy of the miracles which seem immoral and impossible! How have the broader, and some of the "shining lights" of the Church evaded, and reasoned all around an issue which cannot longer be postponed! Every day of the deferment of some serious attempt at adjustment, brings additional discredit upon the Scrip-

tures. A persistent dodging of vital issues cannot longer be regarded as friendly to the written record. Any effort which is here made at clarification, however far-fetched or even unwise it may seem, has for its object a vindication, a defense, and nothing less. As a concrete illustration of principles, let us take the record of one of the plagues of Egypt. Exodus vii, 8-25 reads as follows :

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a wonder for you : then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so, as the Lord had commanded : and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers : and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents : but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them ; as the Lord had spoken.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning ; lo, he goeth out unto the water ; and thou shalt stand by the river’s brink to meet him ; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, hath

sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness : and behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened. Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord : behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink ; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river. And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood ; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded ; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants ; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died ; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river ; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did in like manner with their enchantments : and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them ; as the Lord had spoken. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he lay even this to heart. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink ; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river."

There are doubtless many who still accept this as literal history, for the reason that it appears in the pages of the Bible. There are others, destructive critics, who will utterly deny it, and a few of them will glory in their denial. But some examination may show a wiser way than either. There are many liberal and broad-minded students of the Bible, writers and clergymen, whose lives have been given professionally to exegesis and interpretation, who avoid the leading question. It were far better for the Bible and its future influence for good in the world, if men were more courageous in the use of their reason. Is it possible to throw any light upon the transaction, the account of which has been quoted, by any study of the period at which it occurred, or by some comparison with known facts of the present time, or both?

The modern Occidental hypnotist is but a novice in occultism when compared with some of the adepts of India. But even the former is often able to make one, or several subjects together, see objects and experience sensations which have no objective reality. The wonderful demonstrations of necromancy and enchantment which occasionally are exhibited in the Orient, show that there are extensive realms of the occult yet unexplored by the

Western World. The fuller knowledge of these powers seems to be closely confined to certain secret orders, but there is abundant evidence of their exercise. Visitors and long-time residents of India, of the most undoubted veracity and penetration, have many times witnessed these wonderful illusions. An adept will, to all appearances, make a good-sized tree grow from the hard ground in a few minutes before an assembly. He will toss a rope in the air, and climb it out of sight. Objects of size will disappear and reappear before the eyes of keen observers, when the circumstances make sleight of hand impossible. The most rational explanation is, that by the wonderfully trained psychic power of the adept, the lookers-on are put under a temporary hypnotic spell. The transactions, or visions of them, are entirely in the mind, subjective rather than objective. We of the Western World have, comparatively, but an infantile recognition or understanding of occult forces. The East is the home of skilled magic, and especially was so in the ancient time.

Is there not a possible adjustment and correspondence between ancient and modern phenomena? Back to the very dawn of history, the Accadian, Chaldaean, and Assyrian occultism, symbolism,

visions, trances, demonism, and necromancy, were the leading accompaniments of life. There was little objective material or mechanical thought, but mystery was everywhere. Even government was by oracles, psychic revelations, unseen messengers from above and below, seership, and priestly interpretation. Life was shadowy, and language symbolic and mystical. Out of such an atmosphere in Ur of the Chaldees came Abraham, the great progenitor of the Israelite race. His visions, compared with those of the people by whom he was surrounded, were purer and on a higher plane of consciousness. To him, God was the great overshadowing Reality, and material things were subordinate. The Hebrew race which descended from him was bred amidst angelic and ecstatic visions which became like a native atmosphere to them. They lived a dreamy, subjective life, and nature was but a veil for the unseen. Among them were many magicians who practised wonder-working, from the corruption of black magic up to the white magic of a pure spiritual seership. Men saw divinity in everything around them, but its moral grade corresponded with their own standard of character.

Bearing in mind the peculiar development of the age, which has been briefly indicated, may we not

reasonably attempt an interpretation of the Scripture which has been quoted? To literally turn the Nile into blood, with the rivers, streams, and other pools, together with all the water in vessels of wood and stone throughout the land of Egypt, is so extremely opposed to the whole course of nature, as we know it, that literalism in such a case seems utterly unreasonable. But we need not deny that the account has a meaning, and in the line of what has been noted, one of much depth with such a people. Each time that Moses brought one of the plagues before the mind of Pharaoh, we read that the magicians of Egypt "did in like manner with their enchantments." If Moses had already turned all the water of the land of Egypt into blood, how could it at once be done again by the partisans of Pharaoh, and, were it possible, why would they do anything so destructive to their own people? Everything in the narrative goes to show that, both in the case of Moses and the other magicians, what took place was an occult demonstration before Pharaoh and his court, a vivid dramatic mental picture with no objective reality. For a limited time all the elements of reality were doubtless apparent. We need not speculate as to the exact mingling of hypnotism and other related

occult arts, but undoubtedly it was of that character. The "wisdom of Egypt" was vast at that time, and Moses was "learned" in it all. But his nobility of purpose and recognition of the one God, gave him, as an adept, a superior power over the "enchantments" (note the word) of the other magicians. The serpent which was produced from his rod, or that of Aaron, swallowed their serpents. His enchantments, or psychic illusions, which were given before Pharaoh and his servants, proved their greater power, and probably a deeper realism. Each time, however, after the wonderfully tragic vision wore off, Pharaoh changed his mind ("hardened his heart"), because to him things resumed their normal condition.

It is not easy to put ourselves into the life of an age so radically different from our own, but even modern occultism, and especially hypnotism as demonstrated in India, may furnish a key. To our matter-of-fact turn of mind, visions and enchantments may seem purely fanciful, but they have occupied a large space in the world, and they may furnish the substantial basis for a narrative. The greatest obstacle to an accurate biblical interpretation lies not so much in inability, as in utter lack of effort to take on the local color of the period

under consideration. We have well-defined obsession of various qualities to-day, and our asylums contain large numbers of its victims whose peculiar malady is generally unrecognized. Doubtless it is the same in nature as was the possession by evil spirits in the days of Jesus, but the Bible is so distant and unnatural to our modern sense, that little identification is thought of. Life, ancient and modern, is the same so far as conditions are alike, and the intelligent and sympathetic study of the experiences of one age would shed much light upon those of others.

In the narrative which has been quoted, the Lord is represented as having a detailed and constant conversation with Moses. Doubtless many still believe that it was by means of an outer voice which sent its vibrations to the physical ear. But divine communications to men must remain enigmatical until we are inclined to some study of a subjective spiritual philosophy which teaches that the divine and the human may have contact in man. God is orderly, and the truth of one age will be true in every other. It is conditions and not principles that are in a state of flux. Until the Bible is brought near and used as a mirror, its interpretation will continue to be formal and

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cloudy. The principles suggested in the solution of the Egyptian plague of blood may be applied in numberless other places in the Old and New Testaments with great advantage.

The Hebrew records often refer to the prevailing sorcery, demonology, charms, and enchantments of the neighboring polytheistic nations as being lower in character than the occultism of their own. But there were striking correspondences. Says Dr. John H. Denison, in his able and interesting work, "Christ's Idea of the Supernatural":

"Moreover we have here and there a hint of the method by which the Hebrew seers brought about the state of ecstasy: Sometimes, notably in the schools of the prophets, it was through the use of music; again by gazing fixedly at the precious stones in the high priest's ephod. In the case of David, the king's hand was surrendered to a mystic guidance, which formed the plans of the temple.

"In brief, we have abundant evidence of the best sort, because inadvertent, that the Hebrew visions developed under the same conditions with other occult phenomena, the difference being that the Hebrew occultism was far mightier, far more significant, and that it was devoted to the one God and his righteousness—a difference that we might naturally expect when we consider the colossal nature of the Hebrew organism, the singular coherence of its system, and the spirituality of its origin. There can be little doubt, therefore, that in the

near future the Hebrew narrative, inclusive of the visions, will be accepted as giving us an entirely truthful and naturalistic history of the development of religion in that age. . . .

“Indeed, by classifying the visions of Israel with the same sort of occultism that appears to have followed in every age certain exalted souls, like Joan of Arc, St. Francis, Savonarola, George Fox, Martin Luther, and even lesser personalities when thrown into a state of exaltation, we can retain the whole portraiture of these Old Testament heroes, precisely as Keim preserves the whole of St. Paul’s biography, including his ecstatic vision of the risen Christ, without sacrificing either intuition or logic. It corresponds to the structure of the cosmos that under certain conditions there should be occult phenomena. Magnify the conditions by a thousand years of peculiar environment, natural selection, and specialization, and you may expect a transcendent kind of occultism compared with which everything else of the kind will be a mere dwarf or abortion.”

That which is mystical wears that aspect because of our ignorance of the psychical law under which it is produced. There is an infinitude of truth, especially in the esoteric prerogatives and practices of the soul, to which our eyes have not been opened. If we ourselves cannot induce a vision or ecstasy, shall we ignorantly affirm that none ever existed? How many give any deep attention to the cultivation of “spiritual gifts”? How many ever feel

the vibration of the secret Logos, the Divine Voice in the garden of their consciousness? How many worship in the inner temple and kindle a flame upon its sacred altars? Beyond all other needs, in this modern period of the rule of sense, is that of spiritual illumination.

The Hebrew nation was led for centuries, not by objective worldly wisdom, but by oracular communications, visions, and subjective guidance. The prophetic element, so strong in the Chosen People, was never without eminent exponents, leaders who were channels for psychic and spiritual direction. Does it seem likely that the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire which went before the Children of Israel in the wilderness were visible to the senses, or were they symbolic of spiritual guidance? Perhaps the latter, as a higher directing Force, might be no less unerring and beneficent than the former. Modern materialism mistakes the substance for the shadow, and vice versa. Does the beauty and validity of the Transfiguration depend upon the altitude of the soil upon which it is symbolically located, or was it an unusually lofty and vivid inner experience? Was it the physical or spiritual bodies of Moses and Elias which gave evidence of their presence on that occasion? The

woes of the world are mostly due to the prevailing unbelief in spiritual reality. To the ancient Israelite, visions were not only common but they had a deep meaning. A saint in retracy may experience a vision without an external correspondence, but hardly so, a nation for many centuries. An ideal, in proportion to its intensity, seeks outward expression and correspondence. It craves embodiment, or to be "made flesh."

Students of occult lore claim that for centuries Greece was influenced and mainly ruled by the deliverances of the Oracle of Delphi. It is also thought that the Jewish Ark of the Covenant was modeled after the Egyptian Holy Chest of Oracles. There is a negative and seeming reverse side to every true principle. Sensuous and degrading charms and enchantments are abuses of the normally pure spiritual illumination. The counterfeit or the base alloy proves the existence of the genuine.

Among the leading events of the New Testament which seem to be contrary to universal human experience, are the virgin birth of Jesus, with his physical resurrection and ascension. These are incidental, and in no real sense do they affect the solid basis of vital Christianity. They belong to the realm of dogmatic interpretations which are, at

least, non-essential, and they may be left for further light without any positive denial. These claims are not unique, for they have clustered around the personality of the messiahs and founders of other great religious movements. If the narrative of the nativity be spiritually symbolic, without a natural outward correspondence, it is not easy to see the relevancy of the genealogical line of descent which is so carefully given in Matthew. To make fundamental spiritual truth, which the world needs and is hungry for, utterly dependent upon a single interpretation of an outward event, is a dangerous dogmatism. Eternal truth cannot be bound up with creation in six days, the story of the talking serpent, the arrested sun, or Jonah and the whale. It has an infinitely broader and surer basis. It is fair to say that but few now go to such an extreme.

The credentials of truth are found in the soul of man. Truth stirs and awakens the religious nature, and the sayings of Jesus, even before he uttered them, were there deeply inscribed. But he was the transparent medium through which they flowed and were made personal in expression. The perpetuity of the whole cosmos is dependent upon laws which some suppose are set aside by what miracle has been used to define.

“For hearts the beautiful that feel,
Whose pulse of life beats strong,
The opening heavens new light reveal,
‘Glory to God’ their song.
While bursts confession forth,
That since the world began
No miracle of earth
E’er matched the heart of man.”

The miracle, as the definition of what is wonderful all about us every day, is very fitting. How mysterious, as well as beautiful, the daily changes and phases of nature, the moods of the sea, the aspects of the sky, the golden sunset, and the simple opening of a flower! How marvelous the orderly action of the subtle forces of electricity, and of the etheric medium in which we live, and their employment in, and adaptability to human service! What a miracle to the untutored mind would be the express train, the electric car, the telephone, and many other things of daily use! “Familiarity breeds contempt.” In all cases the wonder about phenomena depends upon the stage of development. The simplest thing is wonderful, but to be so to our consciousness it must be unfamiliar. In reality there are no miracles. The sequences of the moral order may be relied upon. Even were the great Exemplar of law and truth

able to be unique, it would seem natural that he should honor the law by entrance upon, and exit from this plane of existence in the usual way.

But tradition has woven a fabric of mystery and miracle around the personality of all her saints, prophets, and heroes. Nothing is intentionally misrepresented, but expectation fulfills itself. The objective falls into line with the subjective, for imagination is creative. The adorer of the marvelous paints his ideal in his own high color and does not omit a halo. Many of the wonderful works of Jesus are losing their strange aspect as the knowledge of the higher law broadens. In our own time, remarkable cases of healing are becoming common. The potency of mind over matter, of the systematic holding of ideals and of the assertive possibilities of the spiritual selfhood, are even yet but faintly appreciated. Who can fix any final limits to the power of the divine and human coöperation?

With every enlarged concept of nature and the cosmos has come a grander and more worthy ideal of God. Oh, the faithful preachers of the Word, within whose minds has raged the conflict between the light which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" and the supposed loyalty to ordi-

nation vows and obligations! Did Jehovah ever capriciously perform miracles to please his partisans and destroy their enemies? How would that correspond with the direction of Jesus, to "love your enemies"? Some of the modern apologists are reversing their former ideas about miracles. They are no longer the credentials of Jesus, but he is their credential. If he were "very God" we are told that all things should be expected. But it is not explained why many of his followers, who were ordinary men, performed the same works after him. "Greater works than I have done ye shall do." If God's laws and methods which work through man, were available in the first century, they should be equally so in the twentieth. When the higher law commands one which is lower, there will always be surprise to the common consciousness. It is not a violation but only an orderly dominion. The forces of the spiritual realm are superior to those of the psychical, and the latter to those of the material. It follows that the soul should dominate the body, and any inversion of this order causes disturbance. In all the zones of the whole cosmic order, from the lowest elemental to the supreme spiritual, there is a beautiful and normal subordination of each to those which rank higher.

At a certain age, the growing curiosity of a child causes him to take delight in the imaginative realm, where giants and fairies dwell, and, in a way which is somewhat correspondential, when the sense man first enters into the spiritual consciousness the new explorations have a strange and miraculous color. Laws of which he has been unaware are unveiled. To the immature comprehension wonders are continual, but the higher the development the less the surprise at the Unusual. Ignorance mingles the miraculous with its spirituality and religion.

Nearly all the great religions, in their primitive days, and as taught by their founders, were simple in their purity. Only as they became corrupted and in decline did they take on superstition and fanaticism. But the followers of these great original souls have grouped wonders about their names, real or imagined. The undue desire for the phenomenal and the passion for astral or psychical marvels, tend to obscure the simple truth. If one tries to pose as an adept, or occultist, or to captivate by hypnotic power, it is wise to avoid him. The occult is not necessarily spiritual, and may be lacking in purity. Beware of the professional miracle-worker! The works of

Jesus were characterized by simplicity and naturalness.

In modern mysticism there is much that is alluring but not always profitable. Does it tend toward greater goodness, purity, love, and other divine ideals? There is that which is called spiritual which may be unspiritual. The hypnotist who puts his subject on exhibition for spectacular purposes, gain, and the gratification of the instinct for the marvelous, is using an undoubted power for ignoble ends.

Intelligence and spiritual earnestness will shape matter in conformity with its own ideals. Who can fully explain the process? How could Jesus perform wonders of healing, or pass with his post-resurrection body through closed doors? Not by the employment of any laws which the materialist will admit, for the knowledge of Jesus and of every lesser prophet belongs to his own level. The miraculous is purely a relative term and has no absolute significance. Lower sequences are not repealed but simply directed. The latent and legitimate powers of the soul have hardly begun to be discerned.

We have occasional glimpses of transcendent powers and capabilities. In proportion as we

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make ourselves at one with the higher law, it lends us its potency. Gaze steadily upward, and the strangeness which is first apparent will gradually wear off, and beauty and contentment take its place. The miraculous quality is not inherent in events, things, or the Bible, but in the vision of the beholder.

VII

THE PRIEST AND THE PROPHET

Two great and unlike phases of religious life mainly make up the Old Testament Scriptures. One relates to priesthood, with its functions, their exercise and ritual, and the other includes the messages of those preachers of righteousness who are called prophets. In the evolution of the religious life and its expressions, each has its place and time, and both were important factors in Judaism. The distinctive force of both continued in the early Christian Church, though they were in some degree merged so that the demarcation was not so sharp. While none of the writers of the New Testament are called prophets, yet all except the authors of the synoptic Gospels — who were more specifically narrators — were essentially prophetic teachers.

In the religious advancement of a nation — and the same is true of mankind in general — the priest comes first in order. His office is lower in rank and is concerned with earlier and more primitive

development. His work is especially with those who are dependent and require teaching and leading, and for such as would worship by proxy, and through outward forms and rites. There is a period in religious growth when the soul shrinks from direct contact with God, and, in great degree, delegates its worship and craves a "go-between."

Priesthood, as exercised in fixed rules, ordinances, and sacraments, may become formal, and even mechanical. In the observance of prescribed ritual there is a tendency toward an undue emphasis upon the form, and often an unconscious absence of the vital and inner spirit and meaning. A ceremonial law may easily lead to bigotry, so that there comes a blind dependence upon an outward shibboleth, which is not deeper than mere intellectual conformity. To the degree that prescribed methods are authoritative and obligatory, faith in and love to God become secondary. Paul contrasts reliance upon the law, in its external sense, with grace, which includes in a comprehensive term, love and inner faith. The, "Thou shalt not" of the moral law is but the shell which encloses the real gospel, and until the same is penetrated and sweetened there is little of that liberty which makes men free. While it is manifestly

better to keep the moral law in a perfunctory way than to violate it, love and faith may lift the soul above the law so that it is no longer its master.

The officialism of priesthood is its unattractive side, but in the degree that it becomes natural, sympathetic, and devoted to ministration, its office is vital and essential. Undeveloped man, in passing through the bewildering mazes of earthly life, craves guidance and sympathy, and until he develops prophetic quality so as to go directly to the divine fountain he must get some supply through a human channel. A somewhat common prejudice against priesthood arises from a too exclusive view of its more formal and ceremonial phases. But until the great majority of men get more religious self-poise, some real piloting through shallows and quicksands is indispensable. The Church should be a school, and her teaching offices ought not to be eclipsed by ritual and ordinance.

To the soul of feeble spirituality, God is to be known through man — Godlike man. To the degree that the official priest is the natural priest and helper, his soul conveys divine blessing and even forgiveness. He is the electric wire which completes a circuit for the conveyance of spiritual

energy. No man should come between God and the soul unless he makes himself transparent and forms a connecting link. With all the Protestant prejudice against the Roman confessional, when purely administered, it touches a deep spring in the heart of the halting and uncertain penitent. But the office of the confessor is a most sacred one, for, to its subject, it approximates that of the Almighty. The priest cannot forgive sin, but upon true penitence, he can, as a divine proxy, pronounce the outward word of pardon as expressive of an accomplished inner act. But loving human nature, without the insignia of officialism, as it has opportunity, can perform the natural priestly function to his brother man. He can pour in the balm of forgiveness and even pronounce conditional absolution.

The true exercise of the priestly office is not dependent upon ecclesiasticism and is not confined to any line of descent. Inspiration and rich blessing may flow from any ministering soul to another receptive one. Selfishness produces isolation, whereas all good is social in its fundamental nature. Repentance and the higher choice remits, or puts away sin, and the fact and the law may be pronounced, as was so often done by Jesus: "Thy

sins are forgiven thee," so man to his fellow-man may make the same announcement. But it is the inner condition and not the pronouncement which forgives. This principle cannot be stated too often.

There is a sense in which neither God nor man can forgive, because the true putting away must be an individual act and become an accomplished condition. God's forgiveness is always existent and waiting for application. On his part it is a standing principle. So of the man who forgives his neighbor.

But forgiveness must not be construed to signify an immediate blotting out of punishment. Transgression leaves scars, even if forgiveness be complete. The full measure of the cure for the violation of divine law is a matter of inner renouncement and growth. Though immediately potential it is of gradual consummation. So far as you are concerned, you may at once forgive the thief who has stolen your property, and even shield him from outward punishment, but it remains for him to forgive himself.

Under the old Dispensation, the priest ministered at the altar and officially presided over the sacrifices, rites, and full ritual of the temple. It was a sensuous form of worship, fitted only to the needs

of a childlike and primitive people, and the element of true spirituality was only partial and incidental. The devotion of men must proceed from their own plane of life, and in a certain sense truth must be diluted to their own quality and capacity. While truth in itself cannot be cheapened, it must have local adjustment to be of avail. Babies must be nourished with milk rather than with "strong meat."

The prophetic office comes not from ecclesiastical preferment or official position. To be born a Levite, with due formalities added, might make a priest, but it could not constitute a prophet. The true prophet is the product only of a divine process within himself. Every preacher of righteousness of every age, who is a law-giver, and in advance of his generation, is truly a prophet. The name is not in modern usage, but the office never will become obsolete. Every religion has had its prophets, so that ancient prophecy was not limited to the Hebrew nation. But in Israel it was more pure and righteous than elsewhere. But even among the Chosen People there were prophets of many grades. Those of the lower order, often called seers or soothsayers, possessed peculiar psychological powers and were subject to trances and visions, but in some measure they doubtless spoke

the "word of the Lord." However, such occult powers and experiences were not uncommon among all prophets, and they were especially in evidence with Paul, the greatest prophetic character of the New Testament. As the prophet in all ages is preëminently the man of inner states, we are not warranted in our modern disparagement of visions, trances, and ecstasies, and are mistaken if we regard them as essentially and necessarily abnormal. The Bible is full of the accounts of such experiences in connection with its most eminent characters. Human nature to-day is the same in essence and inner laws that it has been in the past, but in its prevailing activities it actually seems to have grown more superficial. With all our boasted education the present age is sorely in need of the typical prophet. Subjective divine illumination is rarely linked with a profusion of technical objective knowledge. How many make much earnest effort to make themselves channels for the "word of the Lord"? How many value inner guidance more highly than outward worldly wisdom?

The history of the Hebrew nation and of the world makes it appear that prophets have been "raised up," or have come upon the stage just when their peculiar messages have been impera-

tively needed. When emergencies have come upon nations or races, the great leader or discerner of truth has suddenly appeared and been found at the front through a divine force of natural selection. Through evolutionary law, no less divine because evolutionary, supply and demand meet and satisfy each other. The crisis or dilemma always calls out the fitting instrument whose office is that of a way-shower. Prophecy may be simply defined as spiritual insight. As this is turned in an outward direction, it also interprets external conditions and clearly predicts their logical outcome.

The prophet, whether ancient or modern, is only the man of eminent interior development. He does not come by way of special or unique appointment, either human or on the part of the unchangeable Lawgiver, but as the result of higher development and conformity to law. To regard him as a special selection by God through an arbitrary choice, as was often believed, is entirely unwarranted. God has no favorites. But those who in eminent degree open themselves to his leading, and feel his presence in their souls receive corresponding endowment.

The great prophets of the Hebrew nation, such as Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah, with others of less

prominence, were like a series of beacon lights in a considerable period of darkness and spiritual declension. With the more distinctive prophetic power, they were patriots, philosophers, and ethical leaders. The teaching of Ezekiel was peculiarly through symbolism, visions, psychological figures, and flowers of speech. All the prophetic characters were bold leaders in righteousness in the midst of an unresponsive or opposing environment. Mingled with their admonition and expostulation, were rich promise and optimism. Each bore aloft his high ideal for the people to whom he brought the divine message. Their prevision of the future was not that of any special and miraculous kind, which with exactitude foretells specific events, but rather, in general terms, they set forth the logical and inevitable outcome of qualitative life and conduct.


The prophet was an unconventional character. Misunderstood and unappreciated by his immediate associates, he was a stranger among his own people. He saw and described that which was beyond their range of vision, and to them was a dreamer and perhaps fanatic. Rarely was he permitted to witness his own final vindication. Persecution was often meted out to him by those who thought they were

doing God a service. He lived for coming generations. The Prophet of Nazareth was the great Ideal and culmination of the Hebrew prophetic era.

The prophets of all ages are the world's heroes. Their utter unselfish devotion to truth, however unpopular, and their walk by faith rather than sight, set them apart as the choicest spirits of human history. They are sensitive souls, so attuned to spiritual laws that they can read clearly the "signs of the times." Verily they have their reward. Says an eminent writer on the prophets of Israel: "The whole history of humanity has produced nothing which can be compared in the remotest degree to the prophecy of Israel. Through prophecy, Israel became the prophet of mankind."

There is often an unwarranted inclination to read backward and to match events which have occurred or are expected, with the recorded words of some prophet. The cause of the event is not the fact that some prophet uttered something of which it may seem a fulfillment. This tendency was prevalent among the writers of the New Testament narratives. "That the prophecy might be fulfilled," was a frequent expression. Such is not the true interpretation of the prophetic spirit. It is not

fatalistic. Even when seemingly specific it is based upon conditions. The many attempts which have been made to concretely resolve and apply the prolific symbolism of Daniel and Ezekiel to material events, past or to come, have proved uncertain and visionary. There is a prevalent insistence upon historic and outward interpretation rather than the purely spiritual illustration which is intended. While the Bible is full of subtle and mystical significance, and while many characters or events stand for some truth or principle, there is a strong tendency among a certain class of minds to make simple prophecy unduly cabalistic and occult. Religion has thus been burdened by many fanciful and material conclusions, which, without any good reason, have been drawn from prophetic symbolism of purely spiritual import. In the first chapter of the Acts there is recorded a prediction made by two men "in white apparel" that this Jesus "shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." There are those who with the best of intent materialize this truth and insist that Jesus in flesh and blood is again literally to descend from the clouds and set up a kingly and physical reign, and they are anxiously looking for the time. Is heaven in the nearby clouds and sky? Jesus said



(Luke xvii, 20-21), "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." Also in the last verse of the last chapter of Matthew, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The spiritual Jesus (Christ) is continually coming in the consciousness of his followers.

It was the object of the prophets, from the least unto the greatest, to teach the truth simply, rather than to mystify it. But Oriental metaphor and simile were the necessary modes of teaching for a people whose habit of thought and expression was essentially symbolic and poetic. Graceful and elastic flowers of speech when frozen into rigid western prose often become misleading.

No two of the prophets of the Old Testament were very like, and there was no sameness in their messages. The "Word of the Lord," of each, was colored or humanized by temperament, environment and idiosyncrasy. The utterance of the prophet was free, so that he was not a mechanical mouthpiece. While he was spiritually independent, there was no radical impairment of the real message. Each preacher of righteousness received the divine "white stone" of truth, in which his

own name was written in secret, and he found in due time some who gladly received his tidings.

After the days of the greatest Hebrew prophets, Isaiah, Amos, Micah, and Hosea, who appeared during or about the eighth century B.C., vital religion declined and formalism and ceremony prevailed. The letter of religion killed its spirit. When Jesus the supreme Prophet came, ceremonialism was universal, and the prophet was practically extinct. For four hundred years no prophet worthy of the name had arisen in Israel, and only the lower phase of priesthood prevailed. Mere ritual had become fully idolized.

But the hard crust was to be broken up, and religion, from being "a valley of dry bones," clothed with spirit and life. The gospel of the Christ was to burst the bonds of the Hebrew race, to emerge from national limitation and be potentially opened up to all humanity. Jesus sowed the seed of the new gospel, and Paul scattered it through all the then known civilized world.

The prophet, modern as well as ancient, is the hope of the world. Through him divine truth is to be shaped to human need and to "leaven the whole lump" of mankind.

VIII

THE HIGHER CRITICISM

WHAT is known as the higher criticism, including also, technically, the lower criticism, is doing a great work in the emancipation of the Word of God. The severance of artificial bandages and bonds, the rational removal of a destructive literalism, the revelation of a true inwardness, with a rescue from conventional bibliolatry, include a wide movement of great spiritual beneficence and importance. The truth, which in a great variety of setting is contained in the Bible, is not only being discriminated but given free course.

The day of destructive criticism by opponents of the Bible has well-nigh passed, and with the decay of an inerrant literalism will lose its motive and foundation. The modern criticism which has been designated by the term higher, is, substantially, friendly and constructive. It is the work of the truest friends of the Bible and not of its enemies.

The higher criticism is the study of the Bible in the history and spirit of the time which produced it. What was the life, and what the prevailing thoughts, motives, inspirations, and ideals, of the biblical authors? The literature of any specific period—and the biblical literature is no exception—is a living transcript of its life and thought. It is no easy matter to step into the shoes of a long past generation, see with its eyes, hear with its ears, and take on its local color. It requires not only superior talent but deep insight. It presumes temporary detachment from present environment, and the exercise of the imaginative and intuitive temperament. All this is indispensable to a correct interpretation. Few in any age are able to thoroughly understand any other period, especially if it be far removed from their own. The great current of historic development must be intelligently traced and surveyed. The higher criticism was hardly possible, in any degree of completeness, before the general understanding of the doctrine of evolution. The theology of any period corresponds with, and is fitted into, its science, philosophy, astronomy, physics, and biology. Thus the higher criticism must include a profound knowledge of human nature, in

itself, and all its outward relations. The psychology of the age to be dealt with, must be grasped, and also the unique subjective and objective idiosyncrasies pertaining thereto. In no other way can its surviving traditions and the underlying motives of its culture and literary remains be discriminated. The higher critic requires a rare equipment, and the modern era has been fortunate indeed in the reverent, constructive and conscientious spirit of the great majority of those who have served it in this supremely important department of research.

While the spiritual endowments and delicate prevision of those who pursue the lower criticism are not so indispensable in its nature, yet they require able discrimination and special literary ability. This research is in a direction more purely intellectual, philological, and technical. Its field more distinctly concerns the dates, authenticity and genuineness of the subject matter, the comparison of various teachings, their identification by literary quality, their unisons, differences, style, racial, and chronological peculiarities, and accuracy of translation and rendering. It will be observed that the higher criticism is mainly concerned with the spirit, while the lower is more

especially devoted to the letter, or the vehicle by which the inner meaning is conveyed.

The believers in literalism, or plenary inspiration, have made less objection to criticism when applied to the Old Testament than to the New, but the principle involved is the same. The light and truth which come to us in the biblical messages must come as literature, an interpretation of human and racial life and experience, and not as a great collection of proof texts for the special defenses of dogmatic systems. The misty traditions in Genesis as to the details of the creation may constitute an orderly story or correspondence, but they come enshrined in symbolism, poetry, and epic. They are the natural product of the imaginative awe and sacred mystery of primitive peoples, and not peculiar to the Hebrew as distinguished from other races and nations.

It may at once be admitted that if the Bible be divinely dictated, verbatim, by God, it should not be subject to criticism. But, even were such the fact, in accord with the seventeenth century view of revelation, its great variety of meanings to different classes of minds would not thereby be diminished. Language may be one thing, but its interpretation depends upon the subjective state of

the individual. Whether or not the Bible, as we have it, be absolutely inerrant, the same text is made the foundation for scores of varying creeds, and in it each finds its full endorsement. Intrinsically, the Bible is an historic sketch of the divine intimacies of lofty souls, a chart of the religious and spiritual development of humanity. The Scriptures cannot be fenced off as something above and outside of the normal product of the mind of man, for their free and intimate relations radiate in every direction. The divine comes through the human, and is not handed down in any miraculous way from the outside. The dramatic story of soul unfoldment as set forth by the writer of the book of Job, the poetic and symbolic songs of the Psalmist, the optimism of Isaiah, the pessimism of Jeremiah, the mysticism of Ezekiel, the rational psychology and spiritual philosophy of a Paul, and the ecstatic visions of Saint John, all show the white light of divinity as having received peculiar tint and shade in passing through the alembic of unlike minds and temperaments. For most able and illuminating interpretation, Harnack, the great biblical critic and student was denounced as a destructive opponent of the Bible, but a truer and deeper view would characterize him as its able defender. He has been

credited with a disbelief of the birth stories in Matthew and Luke, and also of the physical resurrection. He believes that the first gospel is a compilation by an unknown author, and that additions were made to it about A. D. 75. Numerous other differences from the traditional view are noted.

It is not here proposed to enter in detail into the conclusions of the higher critics. The following few instances are merely illustrative. Some of the most able and conscientious biblical scholars believe that the book of Matthew was placed first in the New Testament because it deals directly with the genealogy and birth of Jesus, though probably not written until seventy-five years after that event. The tradition of more than two generations and the change of thought and feeling naturally color the narrative. The popular supposition that the book of Genesis, standing first in order in the Bible, as it does, and dealing with the creative period, was earliest written, is mistaken. There is good evidence that it was not composed before a late period in Hebrew history. The great prophets, Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos knew nothing of the story of the "Fall." Their inspiration and hope was for the future. Their paradise was not in the dim past but in a

grand consummation. In the order of historic development, the Pentateuch — the compendium of priestly legalism — only began after the Babylonian Exile. It is the aftermath of that captivity rather than that of Egypt. The creative story and Garden of Eden are not even alluded to by any of the great seers before mentioned. Would this have been the case if it were the all-important factor in the destiny of man, which "the plan of salvation," as formulated in the traditional creeds, has made it?

The truth in the Bible has the same basis which underlies all other truth. Wherever expressed, inherent excellence, rationality, beauty, and goodness are included in the nature of things. The credentials for truth are within itself. As it is brought into contact with man's higher reason and conscience it is self-attesting. The letter of the Bible is the vehicle for truth, and it is the reality which is infallible rather than that which conveys it. History shows that the assumed inerrancy of the text has always been misleading and has uniformly attempted to beat back the progress of science, invention, and knowledge. "Though the heavens fall," it has been regarded as indispensable that literalism be insisted upon. Religion supposedly

depended upon it, and without it all was lost. How mistaken the conclusion!

As knowledge has increased and new realizations of circumstantial evidence and necessary adjustment have been made, the positions held on the basis of the old idea of inspiration have been found untenable. Citadel after citadel has fallen, until symptoms of a general panic multiply. Meanwhile the real truth remains calmly and securely poised above the superficial tempest which is driving men to shelter. The best thought outside of the church, which also should be relied upon to endorse and uphold religion and spiritual progress, has been needlessly affronted and set in opposition. Even the "natural man" has a genuine respect for, and openness toward rational goodness and the ideal life, but to insist upon alien dogmatic accretions as composing the pure gospel awakens his antagonism. Says Professor Adam Smith: "The critical study of the Scriptures completely dispels, on the evidence of the Bible itself, that view of inspiration so long held by the Church."

The highest reason of man, when clarified by a sincere openness toward the divine Spirit is holy, and will ever serve the ends of a true faith. It may reverently be affirmed that it is God, at first

hand. "The secret place of the Most High" is not in a far-away heaven, but in man. There is his dwelling place, and there is set up the tribunal of truth and judgment.

What may be called the larger faith becomes verifiable from all analogy, research, and relation. Not only human life in the concrete, but universal truth and even cosmic processes lend their endorsement. Religion and nature, both divine and mutually complementary, have had a great gulf placed between them. The sympathetic comparison of faiths, first earnestly made at the Congress of Religions held at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, was an object lesson to the world of the unity in variety, and of the real spirit of religion. The differences developed on that occasion were mostly superficial and incidental. Humanity is everywhere, and at all times, engaged in a search for truth, and in an attempt to grasp and realize the highest idea of God. Obscured or hidden as it may be, there is an universal divine thirst in the soul of man. Symbols, ordinances, sacraments, rituals, devotions, and services, and even idolatries are a signal attestation of natural spirituality and religiosity. Emerson aptly puts that great thought in poetic form :

“Out from the heart of Nature rolled
The burden of the Bible old :
The Litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below —
The canticles of love and woe ;

“The word by seers and sibyls told
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.”

The purpose of the authors of the Bible was not mainly to write history, but to set forth their own religious ideals in the light of events. The cry for righteousness, and the judgments, national and individual for unrighteousness, were the motives underlying the whole Jewish literature. To find the spirit of the Bible, it must be studied like other books. It should also be read between the lines and its indefinable influence felt and absorbed. It must strike deeper than the mere intellectual understanding. The ecclesiastical atmosphere which has been projected around the Bible is the main reason for the modern neglect of it. It hides it from near view and sympathetic perusal. The unnatural glamor turned upon it, repels rather than

attracts. To love the great profusion of lovely things in the Bible need not be a task but a delight. It is a natural book. Gold does not need gilding, and inherent excellence is marred by the addition of artificial and abnormal features. The acceptance of the fact that the Bible is a literature, normal, and at the same time of surpassing merit and practical instruction, would dispel the irrational theory which has hedged it about.

The New Testament is a continuous and higher development of the Hebrew ethical and religious ideals of the Old. The time covered is very much less, and the successive phases of thought and progress are much more rapid. There were no scribes present to report the words of Jésus, and they came down to us colored by various minds, memories, traditions, and personal peculiarities. Added to the Hebrew, other elements entered into the biblical literature, each leaving something of its distinctive quality in what was to appear in due time as a larger unit. The more distinctive Greek philosophy comes to the surface at intervals, and especially in marked degree in the fourth gospel. The New Testament literature is an historic and dramatic sketch of the roots and sources of Judaism's successor, distinctive Christianity. But

like other events and facts, their importance is larger and lies back of these happenings, and resides in the principles and ideals of which they are the concrete expression. Christianity, from being racial, local, and historic, has burst its limitations, broadened its scope, and universalized its application. Jesus was not an author, nor an originator, but a demonstrator. He will ever be supreme as the ideal embodiment of the Christ spirit in man.

There is no disposition among the higher biblical critics to regard unkindly those who have caustically commented upon their painstaking work. Their seeming iconoclasm is only an incidental result of devotion to truth. They would not willingly undermine any one's faith, but rather broaden and deepen it. To be permanent and substantial it must be based upon reality. The command to "believe" may be iterated and reiterated, but the human mind is so constituted that it must have evidence, and a large part of this evidence must be within. It is subjective truth that is winning its way in the world. To feel truth is deeper than to intellectually know it.

The reaction from supposed biblical inerrancy, of which the higher criticism is the moving force, will accomplish a work beyond value in the arrest

of scepticism, infidelity, and materialism. The "unbeliever" is as much a devotee to "the letter" as the traditionalist. Accepting the same interpretation, its unreasonableness arouses his opposition. In literalism extremes meet. The shafts of a Voltaire, a Thomas Paine, or an Ingersoll have been almost entirely directed, not against truth, the Bible, nor religion, *per se*, but against accretions and assumptions which have been put in their place. Truth is inherently vital and attractive. Said Milton :


" Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do ingloriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple ; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter ? "

The present age greatly needs more familiarity with the Bible. It is not only by far the greatest literary production extant, but its strong fiber is largely inwrought in all later literature. It is a great reservoir from which thousands of cups have been filled, and its influence in the shaping of the English language and all deeper culture is beyond estimate. Its familiar sayings, aphorisms, and precepts thickly bespangle the tomes which

most nobly represent human wisdom and learning. But above all, it is to be honored because it has so much of that inspirational quality which inspires.

The teachings of Jesus, aside from their value as oracles of religious wisdom, are found to be in accord with the laws of man's nature on every plane. They are psychological, philosophical, and scientific in their exact adaptation to his constitution. While many of them are so idealistic as seemingly to conflict with current ethical standards, and to be impractical in the present state of society, they furnish the working plan for the higher development of the future. The evolutionary ripeness for their complete exercise is not yet here, but their full non-resistant philosophy more and more will be the attractive pattern for speedy attainment. Their spirit and ideal have untold value.

There need be no fear that the higher criticism will weaken or overthrow the truth of the Bible. Truth is invincible. It is rooted in God and cannot be moved. Scholarship will confirm and make more graphic its beauty and usefulness. Appreciation will increase with a better understanding. Search the Scriptures to know their value. The richest ore is not found upon the surface. If the



Bible will not stand trying, testing, and examination, in the strongest kind of a light, it is unworthy of the confidence which we are invited to centre upon it. The real "Word of God" cannot be shaken, whatever may happen to the dogmas which have been artificially drawn from its text.

The lower criticism is also absolutely necessary to prepare the way for intelligent and useful study. Only by painstaking scholarship can erroneous conclusions be corrected. After this department has done its work, the way is cleared for the higher criticism with its search for the inner spirit and significance. To ascertain the present value and motive of any passage of Scripture, it must be found what it meant to the author and to those of that special era. One might as well call the efficient process of crushing and roasting crude ore, in order to extract the pure gold, "destructive," as to use any such term in connection with the conscientious and careful sifting of the text of the Written Word.

IX

CHRIST AND JESUS

THE Son of God naturally must be a living image of the Father. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them." Sonship, latent, potential, or dynamic therefore must include the whole human family. The image may be shaded, obscured, or even covered with rubbish, but its lineaments are deeply engraved in the background of man's nature. The Son, otherwise called the Christ, is the divine type in man, generic and universal. Jesus was an actualized and concrete demonstration of the spiritual humanity.

Man's birthright includes a divine oneness and this is the normal ideal. Superficially observed, and in the lower consciousness, the divine and the human are two, while in the enlightened or spiritually developed soul they converge and finally become one. The dualism apparent in the utterances of Jesus was employed only to accomodate the ca-

capacity of his hearers, for his affirmations of absolute unity were repeated and emphatic. "I and my Father are one." Undeveloped humanity is oblivious to this great truth. The inner and profound reality is hidden from sensuous gaze.

The accurate use of terms is very important. Many of the misunderstandings of the world might be avoided were there a medium of communication for ideas more precise than words. The names Christ and Jesus, furnish a striking example of uncertain definition. In common theological usage they are employed interchangeably, or as having the same significance. We will venture to suggest the evident definition of each term, with a just discrimination, and then note some of the reasons for the same. We may think of the name, Christ, as defining the eternal divine sonship in man, a vital and intrinsic oneness, fundamental and universal. It involves an inner quality, life, ideal, and temper. It is the divine image and likeness in the soul. In its essence it is impersonal, and it is latent in man until recognized, awakened, and brought into individualized manifestation. Above utter passivity there are many degrees of its personal development, from feeble foreshadowings up to its full rounded local and historic expression, as seen in

Jesus. He was the prophecy and ideal of what mankind is to be. Men are struggling on and upward toward the Pattern of the human filled with the divine in actuality and articulation.

The general propositions which have been briefly outlined will be found, upon examination, to have abundant evidence and proof. All are aware that in the recorded sayings of Jesus he spoke from two different standpoints. It should be easy to discriminate between them. One is from that of the universal, the divine, and the unhistoric, and the other from the local, temporary, and personal. Note a few of the former: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John viii, 56-58) "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." (John i, 9) "If therefore the Son (Christ mind) shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii, 36) "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii, 31-32) "All things have been delivered

unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth who the Son is, save the Father ; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." (Luke x, 22) "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii, 24) These few examples might be multiplied. It seems evident that they are uttered by the Christ mind or Spiritual Principle, through personality rather than by it. A few instances also follow from the local viewpoint, or from the son of man in his finite capacity. "And he did eat nothing in those days : and when they were completed, he hungered." (Luke iv, 2) "For the Spirit was not yet given ; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii, 39) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" (Mark xv, 34) "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit : and having said this, he gave up the ghost." (Luke xxiii, 46) In general these two points of view are designated as the Son of God and the son of man. It logically follows that as any one is conscious of the inner divinity, or Christ, he is warranted in speaking ideally, or from the universality of the inner Light. In many instances, prophets and poets, both ancient and modern, have assumed and

expressed such a potential oneness and authority. A familiar example of such breadth may be quoted from Emerson :

“ I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain.”


It is the God consciousness or Word — the *Logos* — in man, rather than the limited personality which thus finds expression. The latter is the mouth-piece. As man comes into conscious ownership of his higher birthright, all God's possessions belong to the Son, which is the deeper selfhood. Said St. Paul from the inner consciousness, for himself and others : “ All things are yours.” The Christ in man is the most profound and real ego but he is commonly unrecognized. “ And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow : and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish ? ” (Mark iv, 38) He has not yet been awakened. So long as there is no “ storm ” it is forgotten that he is on board. When the outward or material self — the seeming man — finds himself likely to “ perish ” he is led to turn within and to find his real being.

The world restlessly waits for, and toils upward

toward the larger truth of the Divine Mind in which we share. With its emergence from latency toward full incarnation, the crucifixion of the material claimant takes place. Then the conscious resurrection and final dominance of the higher in man are realized. As this is an eternal and universal law, the heritage of all men as well as one seemingly favored one, it follows that as soon as the truth is realized, humanity will rise rapidly to the altitude of Spiritual Principle. Every man has his part in the potency of the higher law, and he may exercise it in a way which is orderly and make it available. "All things are yours" is not merely a poetic sentiment but a statement of truth which is practical, psychological, spiritual, and even scientific in an exact sense. The ownership of moral and spiritual verities, including also subordinate blessings, requires only developed capacity. All ideals which one will firmly hold are his, and their actualization is but a matter of time. But ownership is not exclusive, for the same may be possessed by all. Even God, who is *our* God, actually belongs to all to the degree that a conscious oneness has been developed.

Glancing at past history, we may observe the occasional outcropping of man's divinity during the

gradual course of human evolution. In the early Greek theology the inner divinity was a fundamental idea but not long after a more materialistic faith gained the ascendancy. The great Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325, was called by Constantine to settle the many complicated and disputed points pertaining to the nature of Christ and his office. A great controversy was raging, led on differing sides by Athanasius and Arius. The main questions at issue, were: Has man real and normal kinship and oneness with God, or are they separate and unlike in nature and being? Was Jesus a formal ambassador — intermediate in nature between God and man — sent from a far-away Deity, or did he represent essential God in man? The latter statement was maintained. But the triumph and high-water mark of that Spiritual Principle was short lived and gradually the Incarnation came to be regarded as a single and exceptional act, a matter of formal legalism. This cold doctrine, as might be predicted, soon became devoid of vitality and destitute of spiritual fruitage. The evolutionary ripeness for the larger and inner ideal had not arrived. The conditions seemed to demand something outwardly stronger and more dogmatic, and that great leader and exponent, St. Augustine, among the



early Church fathers became its leading authority. The ideal of God which soon prevailed, was largely inspired by the concept of an infinite Cæsar, a Monarch who rules the world from afar and issues formal edicts. The age seemed to demand that man should be governed by some force more definite and tangible than the spiritual and unseen. Sensuous man must feel external power and bow before outward force because love and the inner Christ were yet too feebly developed to gain a hearing. The faith and zeal of the Primitive Church had waned and intellectual dogma and speculative theology were in evidence. With Church and State united and with alien races to be formally, if not forcibly "Christianized," religion must be a power outside of man to be respected, and naturally the idea of the deity became kingly and arbitrary.

In modern Protestant theology there has continued a persistence of the dogma that the divinity in Jesus was something unlike the divinity in mankind. It still is authoritatively taught that he was not a normal man but a unique interposer or mediator between God and man. This virtually means an abnormal being. He was one who came to make a treaty of peace between discon-

nected and discordant parties but was practically unlike either one. But Jesus says: "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv, 20) The dogma of the deity of Jesus—"very God"—instead of his moral and spiritual divinity has occupied and still holds a basic position in Protestant systems. This either causes, or is the cause, of the claims of his unique preëxistence, miraculous birth, and physical resurrection. These effectually put him out of touch with mankind, and so to them he could not be a human ideal, "the first born among many brethren," or a "first fruit." Does it seem possible that one so utterly unlike man could be, "in all points tempted like as we are?" A divinity in which all may share is all that he ever claimed for himself. A normal Christology which would find the Son or divine image at the soul centre of man, is quite unlike the anomalous grade of being usually assumed for Jesus. Harnack, one of the greatest of modern theologians, denies that the miraculous birth and physical resurrection are necessary to or essentially within the limits of a well-defined Christian faith. It is indeed fortunate that the glorious and living gospel rests upon a broader and stronger foundation than

traditional strange occurrences. Theoretical judgments may be very unlike value judgments.

Is the Christian experience of to-day some supernatural revelation from the historic embodiment, or is it a conscious sonship, the life of God in the soul of man? Is intrinsic Christianity — love, spirituality, and a divine trust — universal in its adaptability or confined to a single channel? Is not a grand truth larger than any single demonstration of the same, however perfect and attractive? Is our experimental knowledge of Christ limited to the earthly career of the son of Man? The present value of the greatest historic fact must lie in the transcendent truth or principle which is back of it and of which it is the product. If God is Spirit, the Son or likeness must also be spirit rather than flesh. Whatever is of time and place — which are sensuous conditions or limitations — cannot in its essence be eternal but rather a manifestation of the eternal. No single life or experience can be absolutely unique unless the moral order be fragmentary and capricious. Correspondence and relation are everywhere. If the most supreme fact, as such, be not the expression of a general law, it can hardly convey practical value or vital adaptability.

The use of the two names under consideration as having exactly the same outlines and limitations, is clearly misleading and belongs to an immature state of Christian consciousness. The two have the same relation which truth bears to its articulation. The essential Christ, the divine human ideal is beyond time and was existent before the advent of the great Exemplar. Christ, the living truth, is the Savior.

It is true that the Christ ideal which was supreme in the seen Embodiment, has only a faint and partial expression in other souls. But the everlasting truth is, God in man. The divine aspiration is kindled at the soul centre. It may have but a gestative, obscured, or hidden life, but it never will die. There is its home. Jesus proved the Christ for us and indexed his full-orbed power. But as a practical ideal, this power ever was. The Old Testament worthies were alive to it and gave it partial, concrete, and visible incarnation. Some of their embodiments were so faithful as to deserve the name of savior in their day and generation. Who would affirm that the life of Jesus manifested the full breadth of the "Light of the World"? Its radiance must illumine every soul, and so its fullness must include humanity at large.

The interpretations of the divine Embodiment vary with different ages and are not quite the same with any two individuals. Any one's divine concept, though having Jesus for a perfect objective Pattern, must be subjective. Hence Christ to every one is always within, while the historic material Personality is without. With the higher evolution of man the indwelling Son will ever have an increasing significance.

The outward life and acts of the great Exemplar have been more or less clouded by the mists of tradition and superstition, but nothing can distort the Spiritual Principle. It is an inner creation, and the highest in every man which his growing capacity will allow. The Messianic expectation of the ancient Jews was centered upon a powerful king and national deliverer, and apparently contained but little of the spiritual element. The biography of the son of Man is but fragmentary and incomplete, and this lack of actual detail leaves all the more room for idealization. The scanty outlines which history and tradition have handed down are filled in and receive their subjective shading—often unconsciously—by each individual. As standards of all that is highest in human life enlarge and move forward, the general

concept of Christ is ever expanding in correspondence. The synoptic gospels and all other records of the visible Personality, as if by a subtle spiritual intuition of what was fitting, cast a veil of silence and mystery over the supreme incarnation, and thus the divine light in each soul sheds its own brightest beams upon it. Then, as now, the materialistic inclination is strong to worship the seen form rather than the larger spiritual Presence, so that Jesus plainly said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away." The homage was bestowed upon the embodiment instead of that which was embodied.

The most inspiring consciousness which is possible to the human soul is God within, for this is "the Son." Its absence means separateness, darkness.

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be
born,

If he's not born in thee thy soul is all forlorn.

"Could but thy soul, O man, become a silent night,
God would be born in thee, and set all things
aright."

God's immanence in man as exemplified in the Personality is rightly called the Christ. This does not predicate an outward individuality, but de-

finds that divinity within, which is dynamic in quality. Every man is inmosty divine, but no one is deific. God embodied a sample of himself in the man of Nazareth, and such an indwelling is a law which runs through all human life. The "plan of salvation" is not a formal scheme to repair the unexpected failure of some original purpose, but redemption, as demonstrated in the specific Example, is an evolutionary spiritual accomplishment. But it is never quite finished in man. Even at the loftiest point supposable, there is no stop, no stagnation. As a procedure, it will never become, but is eternally becoming. The Exemplar was not a spiritual process, but the first-fruit of one. In him was the articulation of an eternal, orderly law. The divine indwelling never had a beginning and will have no end. Incarnation is in the nature of things. Moral indirection is not the result of "a fall," but rather the frictional and gradual elimination of animalism. It includes the growing pains of spiritual enlargement.

The humanity of God is too large to be contained within or confined to a single life, however exalted. The sonship which was incarnated was full but not exclusive. The essence of moral and spiritual beauty is diffusive, and ever increasingly

so. The stream of divinity man-ward is broad enough to fill every human craving and capacity so far as they are opened. If the Model of the gospels were more than human, men are normally barred from the powers and privileges which he manifested. The passing of the dogma of a limited atonement must logically be followed by its twin misapprehension of a limited sonship. Divinity and humanity are but two sides of a unit.

“ More near than aught thou call'st thy own ,
Draw if thou canst the mystic line,
Severing rightly His from thine,
Which is human, which divine ? ”

It is usually assumed that certain familiar sayings and sympathetic acts of the Master attest his humanity, while his miracles form the evidence of his divinity. But the real proof of his spiritual sonship is not contained in a theoretical miraculous birth, resurrection, and ascension, and in “ works ” which to dull materialistic vision seemed wonderful, but in his unbounded love, pure spirituality, and divine self recognition. He claimed the birthright so universally unrecognized by other men. The foundation of the living gospel is too broad to stand

upon such a narrow and uncertain basis as a few unusual occurrences.

Christianity is a free universal force playing through man's nature, independent of time, circumstances, or ecclesiastical limitation. It found beautiful and full expression in the Pattern of the gospels and is ever seeking new forms of outward blossoming and fruitage. It is no finished depository of a body of truth, once for all handed down, but a living and abounding assertion of the divine image. If the Absolute could descend and fully contain itself in one concrete form, the gospel narrative would be finished. Christianity, as a term, has come to signify many things to many men. Its simple proportions have been buried beneath a great mass of accretions with which it has no vital relation. Why should it be burdened with some peculiar form of baptism, sacrament, ordinance, theory of nativity, or unique church polity? The wine of modern thought and scholarship regarding the divine indwelling cannot be put in "old bottles."

The Master receives his true glorification through the race. Were he superhuman in his being and essence his example would be beyond our aspiration. Theologically, if the crucial point of the gos-

pel be the cross, suffering, and death, instead of the life, it is plain that he could not have proclaimed it during his earthly embodiment. Only an invalidated Christianity would rest upon such a basis.

The ecclesiastical and Nicene interpretation of the son of Man, as a definable part of a Trinity, puts him outside the human family, and from its very nature must ever remain an abstraction in the minds of men. But the Christ or Son will ever be Immanuel. The miracles recorded in the Bible, wherever they have not been colored or enlarged by tradition, show that man, as a normal repository of spiritual forces, is a far greater and diviner being than we have thought possible. With the shadow of a theoretical native depravity before our eyes, the vision of ideal humanity has been distorted. Unusual works which cause wonder need not be regarded as beyond the realm of orderly law, but possible to human accomplishment through the divinity which may work in man in ways rarely appreciated. It is God within, and not outside, who doeth the works. The older view of miracles, which interpreted them as examples of suspended or violated law does not honor God or his established methods. He is neither disorderly nor capricious.

The Christ mind did not first begin in Bethlehem, though there was its first complete manifestation. The Master gave utterance to truth that was eternally true, but he laid no claim to originality. Says Professor Benjamin Jowett, former master of Balliol College, and eminent interpreter of the Bible :

“An ideal necessarily mingles with all conceptions of Christ: why should we object to a Christ who is necessarily ideal? Do persons really suppose that they know Christ as they know a living friend? Is not Christ in the Sacrament, Christ at the right hand of God, Christ in you the hope of Glory, an ideal? Have not the disciples of Christ, from the age of St. Paul onwards, been always idealizing his memory?

“Each age may add something to the perfection and balance of the whole. Did not St. Paul idealize Christ? Do we suppose that all which he says of him is simply matter of fact, or known to St. Paul as such? It might have been that the character would have been less universal if we had been able to trace more defined features. What would have happened to the world if Christ had not come? What would happen if he were to come again? What would have happened if we had perfectly known the words and teaching of Christ? How far can we individualize Christ, or is he only the perfect image of humanity?”

The evident lack of vital power in the intellectual concept of the Christ of the confessions and

creeds is giving rise to a modern cry: "Back to Jesus!" Is this conventional and ecclesiastical son of God like the real inner quality which was so perfectly demonstrated? It were well if an ideal of Christly embodiment might take the place of the theological speculations concerning him and his unique powers. Each of the world's great religions has had its great exponent who has been divinely idealized by his followers. It does not dishonor the Demonstrator of Christianity to say that we could hardly expect him to be an exception to the rule. When he speaks from the depths of Sonship, he says: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." (John xiv, 6) Joseph may have been his natural father, but no less the eternal Spirit was in him. What was embodied was universal and spiritual, while the embodiment was material and historic. If Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and descended from Abraham in the genealogical line given in Matthew, what is its historic significance?

The current concepts of the personality of the son of Man, which have prevailed through the ages, have varied with the temper of environment and the theological media through which it has been observed. Among the Hebrews his lack of

material power and leadership was an early disappointment. But he also was the centre of converging expectation and later of apostolic devotion. Upon his name has been built a vast structure of theological speculation, ecclesiastical authority, and much asceticism as well as idealism. He remains the grand focal point of moral, religious, and spiritual life. With but a limited knowledge of the Demonstrator, it remains that that which was demonstrated is the ever expanding and inspirational Pattern of mankind. Upon him we are ever lavishing our "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." A diviner unfoldment of sonship will be the unceasing aspiration of generations yet unborn.

"Not further off, but further on,
Such is the nature of thy guest;
They heaven find who heaven win,
The one true Christ is in thy breast."

It is the nature and purpose of the inmost to seek expression. The "Word" must become flesh, for that is its normal tendency. It is the unending purpose of the world to conceive the Christ. The higher or historic criticism is useful in removing obstructions so that the divinity in man may grow brighter. If intellectual specula-

tion interposes itself between the Ideal and its concrete manifestation it must be cast aside.

Mistaking the material Personality for the Son, men are looking backward and outward for him instead of within. Objective pictures, ideals, and descriptions of that which was visible are ever variant, and will be uncertain guides until every one finally recognizes his image as the highest within himself. Each at length must come to his own. Theological dogma clothes the central figure with unreal and misleading aspects. These appearances promote agnosticism and scepticism. The image presented from the outside being untrue does not attract, while the highest subjective in every man draws him and calls out his aspiration.

Some one has well said that the "Light of the World" comes modified by stained-glass windows, and that the prevailing pigments were Roman law and Hebrew sacrifice. The office of Christ is biological, and not that of legal formalism. The real Son sits serene at the centre of the being of man, while dogmatic opinions about him tell of expiation and substitution.

The general search for Christ — in the highest degree laudable — is too closely confined to the details of the robe of flesh. Unbounded effort has

been put forth to reproduce every circumstance and accessory. The seeker for truth becomes hopelessly involved in uncertain and complex citation and is lost in by-paths. The clinging tendrils of anxious souls which need support are pushed back and bewildered. It is not an embalmed body or a tragic death which is needed in this unbelieving age but life more abundant.

It is true that the seen Exemplar, as a unit of the human race, had a definite personal history, and so far as it can be truly set forth it is of great interest. To be a way-shower he must have had the same powers, emotions, and faculties as are common to mankind. But in him the New Man was fully awakened. On the Godward side he was open for a full and free influx of the Spirit. His was no life of asceticism, but of contact with the world, including all its exposure and reactions. But beyond its incidental surroundings it was so far involved in a larger environment, that it must of necessity be largely misunderstood even by his most intimate disciples.

After what we call death by crucifixion, and following the resurrection, the recorded appearances of Jesus are few, fleeting, and apparently not subject to the laws of the plane upon which he

had previously lived, and which pertain to the physical career. Paul says: "It is sown a natural (material) body and raised a spiritual body." Passing through closed doors, partial and uncertain recognition, and appearance in unexpected places, indicate a more refined and immaterial organization than that which would have resulted from a preservation of the form of clay. No speculative consideration of these appearances need here be entered upon or comparison made with similar manifestations numerously claimed now and through the past ages. But we may well ask, why should Jesus, even if of supreme spiritual attainment, have an experience outside of universal and beneficent laws, and thus be put beyond the pale of mankind? Whatever the character of the post-resurrection appearances, we may infer that they were normal and not beyond the possibility which is the privilege of spiritually developed humanity. The higher life includes capabilities for its own satisfactory demonstration. There is an unappreciated potency and true mysticism in spiritual things which is beautiful and orderly, and it may be kept clear of superstition and fanaticism. The higher consciousness is divinely natural.

God is love, and love, therefore, must be the sub-

stance of sonship. Love was the vital flame of the Primitive Church. It is the length, breadth, and height of ideal Christianity, for it includes all the subordinate virtues. It is a developed relation and temper toward all environment, far and near. "For love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God. He that loveth not knoweth not God. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us the eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son hath not the life. These things have I written unto you that ye might know that ye have the eternal life."

If the New Man be a vital outgrowth in human nature, he is not a matter of time and place. What of Moses and Daniel and Isaiah? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living. Life can become neither confined nor inert, else it is no longer life.

Sonship is an inspiring and beautiful mystery. Can the infinite Father occupy the human form? A transcendent truth, ancient, yet ever new. Thou art wrapped in our fleshly mantle and we feel thee as our very self. Jesus was the "Elder Brother" of the spiritual family of man. The divine lineaments within are to shine through our

own hard features and transform them. We will not be abashed at the glory of sonship. The "star of Bethlehem" is ever rising in human hearts and its light dispels the darkness from receptive souls.

"The dayspring from on high shall visit us,
To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the
shadow of death ;
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

X


SACRIFICE AND ATONEMENT

THE moral and spiritual progress of mankind comes through sacrifice. Atonement is a universal law, and the one great historic fact to which the term generally has been limited, is but a single, though supreme concrete expression of the common principle. The moral order, as it applies to humanity, provides that the best and purest lives must suffer or be sacrificed for the good of the race. The Cross is not limited to Calvary. Rather it overshadows the world. Human attention is prone to be fixed upon some unusual transaction, because the principle of which it is only a manifestation is so broad and universal, that the outward eye looks through and beyond it. This great law, so deeply rooted in the constitution of man, has had multiform articulation in all known systems of religion. Says Trumbull in his "Blood Covenant ":

"In an inscription from the Egyptian monuments, the original of which dates back to the early days of

Moses, there is reference to the then ancient legend of the rebellion of mankind against the gods; of an edict of destruction against the human race; and of a divine interposition for the rescue of the doomed people. In that legend a prominent place is given to human blood, which was mingled with the juice of mandrakes, and offered as a drink to the gods, and afterward poured out to overflow and revivify the earth. And the ancient text affirms that it was in conjunction with these events that sacrifices began in the world."

Since the time when man crossed the mystic line between animalhood and manhood — symbolized by "the Fall" in Eden, and the acquirement of a "knowledge of good and evil" — he has had some innate sense of right and wrong. Then began the first perception of a moral law. Responsibility to something or somebody higher, and a feeling of guilt as a consequence of the lack of conformity to some standard became universal. Fear of penalty was present as the result of an intuitive perception. When men chose the lower instead of the higher, it required no dogma to teach them that penalty was due. But their development was not sufficiently advanced to show them that it was both inherent and corrective, for it seemed to be imposed by some Power outside. Apparently, it was vindictive in spirit, and came



from beings or gods, higher and more powerful than themselves. As these forces or deities were mysterious and unseen, superstitious dread was awakened, and their placation became of the utmost importance. The abandonment of sin, for the prevention of penalty was yet too high and distant an ideal to seem practical, so there was naturally a strong desire to propitiate or buy off the powers which threatened. Sacrifice in innumerable forms thus became universal. But low and mistaken as it was, it was a faint foreshadowing of a true sacrificial law which was not made fully intelligible before the time of Jesus. Previous to his advent, evolutionary unripeness had not permitted any general interpretation of the higher and unselfish principle of renunciation.

Various messiahs, holy men, and prophets, like Gautama Buddha and some of the Old Testament seers discerned the truer ideal of self-sacrifice, but Jesus both lived and taught it in far more definite terms. The prevailing desire was to get rid of penalty, but not by an abandonment of the offense. To give something was the first impulse. The offering must have worth, and cost the giver dearly. Added to its pecuniary value, there was real or implied mental or physical suffering, or both, in

order to render it more acceptable. Among polytheistic races, where there were both good and bad deities, the good were praised and flattered, while the sacrificial offerings were made to the powers of evil. In early monotheism the same principle existed but the good and evil, or the favor and disfavor, were centered in one deity instead of being divided among several.

If the shadow of a broken law rested upon men, the lawmaker must be appeased. Oblations and immolations were thus universal, no less among the Hebrews, than with the surrounding ethnic or pagan nations. The asceticism, extreme rigor, and flagellation of the mediæval ages were outcroppings of the same deep desire of men to set themselves right, and to gain some credit which should offset sin. Any universal sentiment which has a deep root in human nature will find expression, in some form, in every religious system. Men felt that the smoke of burnt offerings had a sweet savor in the nostrils of the Deity, and that the shedding of blood was more efficacious than precious gifts in buying off penalty. But during various periods the rites lost their vitality and became mere formalities.

The strong impulse of Abraham to take the life


of his son Isaac, to please God, was superseded by a higher thought before the deed was consummated. Such an intention was just as contrary to the will of the beneficent God of love — the eternal Father — as that of the prophets of Baal, who cried aloud to their deity, and “cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances” to gain favor, as related in the book of First Kings. Both wished to please the overruling Power, and the mistaken idea of the character of God, or the gods, does not seem to have been very different.

In all ages, and under all religions, the low and humanized concept of God has been the basis of sacrificial systems. He was but a magnified man, or king, vain, passionate, cruel, and even corruptible. The story of man, as he emerges from brutehood and passes by slow degrees through superstition toward the light, might almost be summed up in the one word sacrifice. As a rite it was like an acrid and unripe fruit, but the idea was of potential purification and goodness. Truly the spiritual growth of the race comes through educational friction and tribulation. The worship, service, and almost the totality of the ancient religious systems, that of the Hebrew not excepted, consisted of a perpetual effort to court favor with a ruling Power

which was only their own unlovely concept. Much of this feeling still remains, and even the Christian religion is not free from its shadow to this day.

Every people, and perhaps it is not too much to say, every soul, on the way toward an approximate knowledge of the true God, passes through a stage when God, as seen by him, must be propitiated. The reflection of human passions and conditions upon the supreme Power clothes it with an aspect where presents, suffering, and even an abject attitude are thought to be available for favor.

Perhaps the most forbidding feature of the great world-wide superstition is the idea that God is pleased and conciliated by the literal shedding of blood — innocent blood. Oh, the cruel butchery which supplied the ancient altars with their victims! Read a description of the place of sacrifice in the ancient temple! The cooing turtle dove, the gentle firstling of the flock, the goat and ram and bullock all poured out their life blood to fill the demand of this heathenish instinct. But the taking of life was not limited to animals. Even among the Hebrews, human sacrifices were not infrequent. The daughter of Jephthah, one of the leaders of Israel, a man who judged the Chosen People for six years, was a victim. That the horrid custom



was probably borrowed from the Ammonites only shows its general prevalence. Moloch is the title of the divinity which the men of Judah, in the later ages of the kingdom, were wont to appease by the sacrifice of their own children. Jeremiah and Ezekiel make frequent and bitter reference to the "high places" for the sacrifice of children by their parents. Such a place was built beneath the very walls of the temple at Jerusalem on the slope of the gloomy valley of Hinnon, or Tophet. Though these offerings were devoted to Moloch, the cruel ritual was so closely associated with Jehovah worship that Jeremiah repeatedly found it necessary to protest that it was not of Jehovah's institution. Even among the intellectual Athenians, there was an annual human sacrifice. A man and a woman were hurled from the brink of the Acropolis, as sin bearers. The Romans threw their victims from the Tarpeian Rock. But illustrations need not be multiplied of a barbarous rite which for ages was like a pall over the most righteous nations of the ancient time.

The universality of a superstitious fear of an unseen and uninterpreted Absolute, with an intuitive sense of inward demerit, naturally found its climax in an unworthy view of the Atonement

made by Jesus. That the God of all love, whose children we are, and in whose likeness we are made, could have satisfaction in the shedding of innocent blood, would be revolting to us, had it not been enshrined and poetized in sacred rhetoric, hymn, dogma, and religious association. During the earthly ministry of Jesus, and for a long time before and after, the world was full of slaves and captives. Generally they were prisoners who had been taken in war, or persons condemned for crime or debt. Often they were set at liberty through the payment of a sum of money which was called a ransom, and the act was one of redemption. As men are, and were the slaves of sin, and as they could become free through being ransomed by the higher, or Christ life, the common fact became a natural figure or correspondence. But it was a redemption from evil, and not from the anger of God. Repentance and the abandonment of wrongdoing frees men from bondage to their lower selves, but there is no bondage which is of God. So long as evil was commonly personified, it was a captivity to the Devil.

Only through perversion, or a misleading literalism, does the Bible seem to teach that Jesus was punished for the guilt of man, or in man's place.

If a legal debt due from man to God were paid by the death of Jesus, there would be no place for the divine forgiveness or love. The cold, formal, and technical view of the Atonement — now happily passing — has long burdened the Church and the world. It is foreign to the beneficent principle in its unperverted integrity. The exact term was at-one-ment, and it meant full reconciliation. The change implied was on the human and not the divine side. While the detached "letter" seems to express a divine satisfaction through a purchase, by the shedding of physical blood, Jesus taught no such dishonoring doctrine; neither was it literally held by the Primitive Church nor for some time later. It is evident that if redemption and salvation are conditioned upon his death, he could not have brought them to light during his life and ministry, nor could they have been made known at any time previous. His mission was not to appease the Father, but to express and demonstrate him in the flesh. This was necessary because the consciousness of undeveloped man is material. Spiritual lessons must be brought down to his own level, and illustrated.

It is interesting to note how a perverted view

of the Atonement grew up. As the Church under Constantine became identified with the State, and lost its pristine spiritual power and beauty, the quality of hard Roman legalism was dominant. God became a distant and unfamiliar "dread Sovereign." The slavish fear with which the surrounding nations regarded their deities was measurably absorbed and it displaced the earlier apostolic and more distinctively Greek ideal of the indwelling God. From a formal, austere, and unlovable Deity men demand some shield. They cry out for something to interpose between their own repulsive concept of God and themselves. Nothing could be more natural than such a demand. They were told that they must love God, but it was morally impossible. Rather they would shrink from him and demand that his face be hidden. Hence the dogma of an interposition. "God is love." Love warms and spontaneously attracts and brings at-one-ment. Did Jesus or anything else need to interpose between Love and love? It is not the true God, but a God made by their own imagination that men want to be delivered from. Rightly interpreted, blood symbolizes the inmost quality, not the death but the life. The blood of a race, a dynasty, or a family

signifies the strain, the hereditary character. Nothing should hide God.

Except through a misleading literalism, the Bible does not teach that Jesus was punished as a substitute for man, nor that the wrath of God was visited upon him in our place. But, as before intimated, when he came sacrifice covered the whole religious horizon of the Hebrew nation. As a rite it was perpetual, and the blood of slaughtered animals ran in streams from the great altar, and the smoke of burnt offerings was thick in the temple. Men did not know how to worship without the altar and its victim. When Christianity superseded Judaism, what more natural than that the idea of sacrifice should continue in some form. The best of everything was to be offered. Though a purer and better thought existed among a few in Israel, in general the idea of victims in the old religion was transferred to a great victim for the new. He was the typical lamb and he the perpetual passover.

But Jesus was not slain by God, nor by friends, but by enemies out of hatred. His murderers had no idea of worship through their criminal act. All the true sacrificial quality was spiritual and typical

and resulted from a devotion to the truth, and was a lesson in human service.

When a potentate of the East was feared by his subjects, or even by his enemies, or when he was offended, gifts were presented to pacify him. To the common people of Israel, Jehovah was much like a greater Monarch, and in their view of his character efforts toward appeasement were perfectly logical. The real work of the "Son of Man" was to bring the soul into contact with God and such is the present Christian ideal. All formal sacrifices, as a rite, are survivals from paganism.

The death of Jesus was not unique in kind. He was a martyr of unexampled divinity and dignity, but only one among untold thousands who have given their lives for the truth. The true Atone-ment was the supreme expression of love for humanity. In the attempt to take the terms, "redemption" and "ransom" in a literal and physical sense, there was a theory extant for several centuries in the Christian Catholic Church, that the ransom which was paid by the Crucifixion was given to the Devil because he was the enemy who holds sinners captive. The claims of Satan had to be met and a fair equivalent paid for freedom.

This exactly corresponded to the prevailing custom of ransom which was given to Oriental despots for the liberation of slaves. Just debts must be discharged, for sinners had virtually sold themselves to the arch-enemy of mankind. Such a dogma, which for so long a time was orthodox, demonstrates the terrible bondage which comes from a concept of the letter as the reality.

God is eternally reconciled to man, and this gospel, or good news, was the fundamental message of Jesus. Only a few highly developed souls believed it before that time, and the conviction is yet by no means universal. As men had to buy the favor of the despotic and selfish earthly monarch, so they thought it necessary to win the favor of the heavenly Father. Dr. James Freeman Clarke called this "the warlike view of the Atonement." This was succeeded by one based upon the rigid rules of Roman jurisprudence, and this has been termed the legal theory of the Atonement. Hugo Grotius proclaimed still another hypothesis, which has been termed the governmental theory of the Atonement. In effect, it was that God punished human sin through the death of Jesus as a necessary warning against future sin. The Crucifixion was therefore re-

quired on account of its deterrent influence as a moral regulation.

It has even been maintained that the total guilt of the race was so concentrated and intensified that "Jesus bore it all." What fear and woe have been brought into human life by hard and repulsive dogmas like these! The true "expiation" for sin consists in putting it away. There may be voluntary vicarious suffering, but not involuntary vicarious punishment where it is not due. The moral order is not arbitrary but reasonable and just. Transgression provides for its own punishment through inherent sequence and this is not vindictive but remedial. Such results turn men away from sin and are therefore truly beneficent in their operation. The utility, and even goodness of those human experiences which are seemingly unpleasant, is aptly expressed by Browning:

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the
throe!"


The great controversy which raged so long between the advocates of "a limited Atonement,"

and one which was general has well nigh ceased. Whatever the differing opinions as to the quality of the work of Jesus, few, at present, question its general availability. It is unwise and uncalled for to revive any old controversy which is virtually settled. Almost the same might be said about the substitutionary theory, so far as actual current thought is concerned, but the official statements of the dogma still stand and thereby challenge honest criticism. If the "confessions" of a Church are not to be taken as authoritative, who shall define its position? Says the Westminster Confession, which for so long has been a standard: "The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and hath purchased reconciliation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven for all whom his Father hath given him." The great Roman and Greek churches state the dogma yet more strongly. Behold how rapidly such unworthy ideals of God are vanishing! But for psychological reasons the concentrated imagination of ages cannot be dissolved in a moment. Spiritual evolution is not true to its name unless it be gradual.

In the past, theological speculation has often interpreted the cruel sacrificial rites of ancient Israel

as foreshadowings, or perhaps of shadows thrown backward of the great sacrifice on Calvary. But there is no proof of any such relation, and their moral unlikeness is pronounced. The change was rather a great step in the upward march of humanity. The whole system of placation through gifts, bribes, and blood was one in common with heathenish ideas and practices. It did not originate with Moses, and he put limits upon the common tendency so far as was practicable. It was discountenanced by the long line of Hebrew prophets which came after him. But for several centuries before the advent of Jesus it was very prevalent and the moral decline in Judaism was marked. Religion became a hollow shell and righteousness an empty ceremony. The "Son of Man" condemned such formalism in the strongest terms. In modern times the dogma of the divine appeasement which has occupied such a prominent place in the Christian system has been a great obstacle to spiritual progress.

Punishment, as the sequence of guilt, is not bought or sold, and in the nature of the case is not commercially transferable. The sacrifices which lie in the pathway of a noble and unselfish life are not made by bargain or legal technicality. The



martyrs of all ages have endured their trials because of their love of truth, principle, and righteousness. There was nothing in them of official obligation or imposition. There was always a dear object that was supreme which well-nigh transformed their pain into pleasure. Often they passed out of the body singing hymns of praise and rejoicing. But how different the victims which have been forced, and with the innocent animals whose blood has been poured out because it was thought that it pleased God ! Said the divine perception of Isaiah, the greatest of Hebrew prophets : "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord : I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them." The "word of the Lord" through Isaiah bears the stamp of greater purity and a higher inspiration

than that of a majority of the early writers of Holy Writ.

It is plain that Jesus did not regard himself as a propitiatory sacrifice or a divine credit for debt. He was rather the Bread of Life, the great Healer, the Door, or the Vine. But there are two or three passages which seem to carry the sacrificial idea, the most significant one of which, is: "And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many." (Mark xiv, 22-24) This is so out of harmony with his general teaching, that if taken literally, it would seem to be a subsequent interpolation. Any single passage of Scripture should be interpreted, not only in the light of the context, but of the general tenor and spirit of the subject as a whole. The letter of the passage forms the basis for the Roman Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, or it may suggest ideas yet more abnormal. But if its genuineness be unquestioned, in accord with the usages of Oriental imagery, it would signify that the flesh and blood, as symbolic of inmost

moral quality, would remit or put away sin. The riddance of sin depends upon a likeness in character to that of Jesus.

Regarding the various statements of St. Paul, which seem to bear the stamp of the propitiatory principle, it should not be forgotten that though he is called the Apostle to the Gentiles he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," and that he endeavored to adapt the gospel to Jewish ideas and to win his countrymen. He was the product of, and steeped in, racial thought. Figures and symbols were carried over and made serviceable, so far as possible, in the enforcement of the reformed religion. Sacrifice and offering for centuries had been stratified in Jewish thought, and much would survive the transition. The great ceremonial of their religion could not immediately vanish, and, at the least, sought some invisible correspondence.

But Christianity has lived and will survive as an inner life, even though its technical theology be somewhat colored by pagan ideas. There is a true sacrificial philosophy, vitalized by love and unselfishness, in the sublime non-resistance which Jesus taught in plain terms. The world is full of voluntary self-sacrifice. But it is transformed by the beauty of its mission and becomes joyous in-

stead of grievous. The greatest gift or tribute which can be presented to God or man is service, something of one's own self. The sacrifices made by devotion to paternal, filial, and other relations of wider range, become privileges and blessings. They are not legal purchases, or destructive in their working, for they conserve life and character.

And now the supreme problem in the beneficent moral order which at first seems insoluble, is the universal mystic principle by which the innocent suffer, for, in, and with the guilty. The wife suffers for the sins of the husband, and the friend for those of the friend. The innocent members of the community suffer for its collective transgressions, and so through all the relations of complex life. Even nations suffer for each other's wrong-doing, in which they have no part. How can such a fundamental and universal principle be reconciled with the goodness of God? Only from the deeper and truer standpoint of racial solidarity. If each one suffered only and exactly for his own misdeeds, it might at first sight seem more just, but it would promote selfishness. His motive for obedience soon would become narrowed to his own personality. He would care little for the course of others, provided his own conduct were correct. But his

peculiar interests are really bound up in a great bundle, and that must be covered by his care. Whether we will or not, we are our "brother's keeper." Nothing less than this law of interchange and inclusion could educate us to human unity. The affairs of all are woven into one web, and cannot be disentangled. No man can afford to disregard the principle of vicarious love, and service, for its multiform lines cross each other like a net-work. Nothing less powerful and ubiquitous could ever stem the tide of selfishness. But comparatively few yet fully realize the tremendous sweep of this divine ordinance.

But true self-sacrifice is not the blotting out of self; rather it consists of making the most of the individual. If there is to be bestowment, it should be rich and vital. A true self-love is not selfishness, and it is entirely consonant with love for others. Such an affection is only the overflow of the growing stock which is in store. Not only is the world helped by doing, but also by being. Every man should make the most of himself because he is the means, as well as the end. The rounded moral and spiritual character of every man swells the intrinsic assets of the human world.

XI

THE REAL SEAT OF AUTHORITY

A SERIOUS obstacle to the progress of religion, or Christianity in its broad sense, is the assumption of an official authority from the outside. Not merely in religion, but in civil affairs, in science, ethics, and every department of life, there is a growing idea and ideal of freedom in the modern consciousness. The divine right of government by kings was an evolutionary stage of the past. Men are coming to decline allegiance to edicts which come from over their heads, but increasingly respect the promptings of conscience and the higher intuitions from within. The force of all authority, which may be termed arbitrary in its nature, is visibly weakening. Evidence and reasonableness are demanded. Credentials must be exhibited and imposition is giving place to free expression.

The ideal of civil and political government, is, that it shall be in and of the people, and that its proper origin is neither above nor outside of them.

Official exponents of the law are more truly servants than masters. Their apparent domination is really but the instrumental channel for the self-expression of the freedom of the community. Back of the official, of whatever grade, stands the whole body politic. The ideal of a normal and inborn democracy is the distinguishing feature of the new time. It runs through every zone of life, spiritual, moral, ethical, political, and social. The arbitrary quality among the few remaining institutions which have a monarchical spirit, is rapidly being shorn away.

As evolutionary wheels do not turn backward, there is no probability that the general principle of absolutism will ever resume its sway. The human mind, as it advances in the search for truth, and in fuller self-manifestation, exults in its new-found freedom and overturns precedents, breaks over limitations, and questions traditional assumptions. If religion be a divine force in the soul, and the spiritual life an inward experience, it follows here, even more than elsewhere, that authoritative dictation is illogical. But a persistent conviction yet remains that a corresponding liberty should not supplant official Christianity. Man, instead of being a source, is expected to receive

an alien application which has been prepared outside. He is to submit to a system which is imposed, and needs professional treatment. If he exercise his God-given quest for Reality and steps outside of certain fixed ecclesiastical limits, he is liable to be called a sceptic, or perhaps, even a "free thinker." To think without trammels may be noble and profitable, but in the past it meant opprobrium. Would it be strange if in due time it should be significant of honor?

Official Christianity is doubtless sincere in asserting the authority of Dogma. It may be even admitted that as a stage of growth it naturally precedes the consciousness of inner light and freedom. In the evolutionary order the higher development and spontaneous expression come later. Whatever is "under authority" must be immature. The fact that the thralldom of ecclesiastical sovereignty is in decay speaks volumes for genuine spiritual advancement. No longer hedged in by intermediate formalities, man may come face to face with the direct divine guidance, the indwelling God. That, and that alone constitutes pure democracy in the spiritual zone.

During the childish consciousness and crudity of human unfoldment, there is a place for gentle

dictation. In its order it has been useful in the former time, and no contempt need be cast upon it. As a preparatory discipline it has done a work. But if the spirit of the present era seem unduly iconoclastic, it is but a natural reaction, a full swing of the pendulum. Reactions often go too far, temporarily, but the intrinsic elements of self-regulation from the subjective side, in due time, assert themselves. Reaction then reacts upon itself. Were it not for this compensatory law, it would seem desirable that dogmatic authority should not decline any more rapidly than the inner and truer guidance comes into evidence. A seething confusion caused by the mingling of these two counter currents characterizes the present period of transition.

In the ethical, civil, and political domain, it is also plain that the reaction from formal and instituted authority may have proceeded too rapidly. Here is the same disorderly transition. A true democratic self-assertion can come only from more lofty ideals, moral education, and a development of individual righteousness which shall bring up the collective average. Democracy is good, but when forced in advance of its evolutionary ripeness it may fruit in license, and a disregard of inner as

well as external law and wholesome authority. New tyrannies introduce and install themselves in the name of liberty.

The ideal utility of every institution in its time and place, forbids blame upon the Church for holding on to its authority so long as possible. Its replacement not as an educational institution, but as a ruling Authority, will quietly be accomplished as rapidly as the nature of things will allow. Far better, belief tinged with error, and even superstition, than no belief. Nothing is so doleful and barren as empty negation and indifference. The very activity of a strong dogmatic faith will tend to purify and broaden it.

Thoughtful men often look askance at religious institutions, and avoid the Church, because Christianity is presented as a coercive system, and as an element which is not native in their nature. Its appeals come in the light of an unwelcome necessity. It does not seem to be the emancipator which is ideal, and has not the aspect of "good news." In this era, when men are saturated with the spirit of democracy, whatever is arbitrary is received with suspicion. The distrust of the workmen as well as the more highly educated part of the community is symptomatic. Whether or

not this feeling is well founded, it exists. In view of prevailing conditions, shall Dogma continue its assertiveness? In this connection it seems fitting to trace, briefly, something of the tendency of Authority, as shown in some of the broad ecclesiastical movements of the past. Whether tested upon an extensive or limited scale, principles and systems measure themselves upon humanity.

The Eastern, or so-called Orthodox Church most perfectly represents the spirit of absolutism. The dominant and all-embracing idea is Dogma. The grand purpose is to preserve intact, and impose certain forms and statements which are assumed to be final. The system, complex and fitting in every detail, has been closed and sealed, once for all. There is no room for growth or improvement. The natural outcome is moral paralysis and spiritual decay. Its ceremonies are dramatic and sensuous, and their observance punctilious and formal. Its human product is superstition, ignorance, and a slavish subserviency. The political autocracy of Russia meets and becomes one at the apex with the Orthodox absolutism. Such a system of Authority exercises little shaping force upon the morals and ethics of its votaries, being quite disconnected from practical life.

After the Greek Church, next in order of towering Authority comes the Roman establishment. Tradition admits of no modification of Dogma, and truth is assumed to be a completed quantity. Free thought and expression for the individual is dangerous and prohibited. A spiritual and religious monarchy is the result. The Pope is the only divine channel and the highest duty is submission. As God's Vicegerent and infallible interpreter, obedience to him furnishes the only security. Logically, it is a most complete mechanism, and all its parts and details fit their places.

It is evident, at a glance, that the Roman, like the Eastern Orthodox establishment, lies athwart the path of modern religious democracy and individual free expression. It belongs to a former era when men could not be trusted, and when even the Bible could not be popularly received except as filtered through the channels of priestly interpretation and dogmatic shaping. It is a spiritual cosmology of the Ptolemaic era, a natural correspondence. That there is a rapid decline in the power and prestige of the Apostolic See is evident. From the early centuries down to the sixteenth, the Roman Hierarchy employed all available means to extend and consolidate its imperious sway. At

the end of that period its supremacy was seemingly complete. The high and low, the king and peasant alike were humble suppliants. But it was soon to lose Great Britain, and most of the northern part of the Continent. Much more recently its dominion has been put off in Mexico and a portion of South America, and finally in Italy and France. The unnatural combination of Church and State has been repeatedly severed, and the process seems likely to continue. The width of the breach in France is significant. The expulsion of religious orders, the civil absorption of religious property, which was the result of long accumulation, with many other indications are all eloquent of the march toward complete disestablishment. Everything points toward religious liberty in the near future in all the countries of the civilized world. It is an interesting problem whether the Anglican Establishment will be wise enough to mark the universal trend toward religious emancipation, and gracefully bow to the inevitable, or cling tenaciously to the reign of a régime which belongs more properly to the past.

With all its faults and by-gone intolerance, the exponents of the Roman Church have been mainly sincere and its general work in its allotted time

has been conserving and beneficent. As a great restraining moral and ethical force, and as a bulwark against paganism, polytheism, and a blank atheism, it has been an important saving influence in the world. The higher evolutionary philosophy puts a beneficent interpretation upon the utility, or at least, the negative goodness of Dogma. Any system, even if mingled with grave errors, that is primarily designed to minister to the spiritual nature, will find a satisfied following on the plane of its own distinctive quality. No religious system is bad *per se*. As an institution of varying quality, the Papacy has received more painstaking devotion in past ages than is accorded to it to-day. Such as it was, it was thought to be so indispensable for salvation that people must have it forced upon them whether they would or no. This feeling, rather than any inherent love of cruelty, doubtless was the mainspring of much of the former religious persecution. The feeling was: "Save their souls," the most intrinsic and valuable part, even if, as a means, their bodies must be sacrificed. If baptism and assent meant eternal life, and non-compliance endless torment, it were a logical kindness to force submission, even with knife and fagot. Thus, the real savagery was in

Dogma rather than in human nature and intention. From this point of view, the Inquisition was a humane and beneficent institution. What was the value of bodily integrity for a few short years compared with an eternity of indescribable suffering?

But behold how Dogma has softened! With traditions and edicts almost literally intact, as officially preserved, what a change in their spirit and life! It shows that language matters little, while its interpretation is vital. The rigidity of Dogma is dissolving at its fountain head. The Roman Church of to-day, with all the retention of its absolutism and infallible authority, in form, is practically mild and apologetic, and undoubtedly is a wholesome power for good to the great majority of its adherents. Dogma in its modern mellowness is more wholesome than materialistic negation. It is far better to believe something than nothing. Then, if error be mingled with faith, the combination will gradually purify itself in spirit and practice.

The Roman Church has been likened to a watchful mother, within whose arms its children can securely rest. They come to a place where there is no controversy, and where everything

has been completely wrought out for them. There is no necessity for thinking. Long ago that has been done for them. Graceful conformity, which may sit lightly, is all that remains. It cannot be denied that temperamentally, there are many who wish to have all ultimate questions fully settled for them. Why should they trouble themselves about such things? There are those who are far wiser, and whose official duty and privilege include a professional application of the Church's saving ordinances. But to what extent can one be "saved" by proxy? Are the avenues Godward entered through toll-gates, and can these be swung open by keepers of a certain official order. Does St. Peter, or any other saint, carry the keys? To what extent can priestly absolution transform unfitness into fitness, and turn the scales of righteousness and spiritual character. Here again, the evolutionary principle intervenes, and suggests: If direct effort and advancement be wanting, may not that at second hand be better than none? Yea, verily.

To such as accept churchly, or any other outside Authority, the Roman communion is the logical finality. John Henry Newman honestly believed in the location of an infallible ecclesiastical Au-

thority between God and man, and therefore his surrender to Rome was entirely logical. The sacerdotal movement in the Anglican Church is Rome-ward by virtue of a psychological law which is as constant as gravitation. It is but a halting place on a direct highway. Between free and spiritually democratic Protestantism with its spontaneous expression, and full-fledged dogmatic Authority there can be no intermediate finality. The latter discredits nature and the mind of man, and assumes that unbelief is inherent. It postulates the world as alien to God, and teaches that he can be approached through an outward organism, especially set up for the purpose. Once introduce infallibility in any department of religious life and it must go into all. The infallible Bible must have an infallible interpretation by an infallible Church, with an infallible Head. But there is a missing link. The lack of an infallible people to receive it, brings fallibility into the whole.

In Protestantism, using the term as inclusive of a great movement, there was a general rebellion against Authority. The protesting, or independent spirit in man against absolutism, in some degree has always asserted individuality, but in the sixteenth century it became a wide-spread coherent

movement. The human conscience refused longer to be bound, and the revolt against Authority became formidable. The Roman Pontiff tried in vain to suppress it, and there began a conflict between traditional absolutism and free human expression which is yet far from ended. In a word, the crucial question: Where is the real seat of Authority? is ever repeated. Is human reason to be fettered and religion shut up in a sealed abode with certain exclusive keepers? Is the most vital and sacred department of life to be forever barred against progress? Are the only men, or orders of men, who are capable of receiving a divine revelation dead and turned to dust? Is man in his Godward aspiration to be held back, not only to second hand inspiration, but to the forms and limits imposed during the very dawn of religious development? Luther, and soon after some other brave souls, answered this question in favor of the right of private judgment.

As the Protestant movement became more general, well-defined efforts for its spread multiplied. With the Roman Hierarchy set aside, as final and ultimate Authority, there soon became a natural inquiry for a successor. Where now are your credentials? What is the binding force for your

teaching? If not one kind of infallibility, there must be another. The time was not yet ripe for any general understanding of an indwelling God, or for the consciousness of a divine light or leading in the soul. The authority demanded was yet to be arbitrary, and from the outside. The evolutionary level for democratic ideals, in religion, was still above and beyond the reach of that time. God's authority must still have visible form, and be backed by human prestige. For the Protestants, the Book was the only available answer to the demand. Infallibility was a required condition. Thus the inerrant Book, as an Oracle, took the place of the inerrant Pontiff. Whether or not divinely reasonable, you must believe so and so because God demands it in the Bible. It is his own voice and language. Thus, the human joy and inspiration of a direct approach to God was set aside, and scholastic and theological barriers imposed. The idea that God is a great King upon a throne — with human passions and limitations — and that the Bible is his literal proclamation, was the fundamental thought. What kingship — with a Roman background — implied in that age may be imagined. It was law, not love, imperious demand rather than Fatherly likeness and drawing.

These, with a surrounding cluster of dogmas to match, defined the religion of that period. Nothing different could have been logically expected. Man's higher nature was repressed and outlawed. The Protestant movement soon took on the same spirit as its predecessor. The private conscience was seared, and to think freely about the truth which the Bible richly contains was impiety.

To give the Book free course and let it speak for itself, was simply impossible to the intolerant thought of that age. In reality, it was not the Bible which was declared infallible, but only a certain interpretation of it. Thus the sixteenth century became noted for the rise and spread of theological abstractions which were strongly enforced. In the century following, these decrees and doctrines were gathered into creeds and confessions in rigid form. The most important one, the Westminster Confession, has come down to us as "a standard" and is still widely defended. It would be as reasonable for us to retain the sixteenth and seventeenth century standards in philosophy, ethics, physics, astronomy, science, and invention, as in those of religion. The fact that tenfold more light has come since those days, even upon the history and construction of the Bible itself, is widely

ignored. The anathemas of the Almighty, forged by official ingenuity, descended upon the heads of those who failed to conform in this life, and were positively promised for the next.

But the Protestantism of the present day is far more liberal. At least a considerable minority — perhaps majority — of its adherents do not insist upon biblical inerrancy and infallibility, a limited atonement, total depravity, or a doom of eternal torment. Those, also, who retain these dogmas, as a matter of form, hold them with a mildness and apologetic consideration which were formerly unknown. The re-interpretations made by the orthodoxy of the twentieth century would be unrecognizable by the ancestors from whom it came. Dogma rapidly declined during the nineteenth century, especially during its closing decades. Its aggressiveness has been turned into ineffectual defense. Instead of "speaking with authority" it seeks to find excuses for its existence. But yet, it often says, in substance: Believe the Bible as we believe it, or you do not believe it at all. But ecclesiastical censure now bears but a faint resemblance to the thunder-bolts of the past. Most of the deeper thinkers in the Church now admit that all biblical interpretation and conclusion logically

converge and ultimate in the spiritual perception of men. It must find not only its home but even its rise in the soul.

Dogmatism requires that the admission of biblical Authority be granted preliminary to the study of the Book, and thus every statement is judged in advance. Other literature is taken in its general tenor, while the Sacred Writings are often textually disjointed, and in arbitrary combinations made the foundation for theological systems. The unreasonable use of "proof texts" and general suspension of all literary usage has rendered the Book unreal and unpractical to much of the trained thinking of our time.

The scattered manuscripts from which the Bible was finally compiled make no claim of unique authority as a whole, for that was impossible. Who then knew what the Bible was to be? That question was to be decided centuries later, after heated and hair-splitting argument, by a vote of the majority of a Council. Errors, mistranslations, and interpolations were evident, but they were ruled out. Reason must be suspended and an arbitrary dictation put in its place. Has not the time now arrived when the good old Book should be taken for what it really is? Is it not plain that it is not

a fetich, not a breastwork for the defense of dogma, not an abnormal or miraculous missive, but a Book, grand in its merit, superlative in its truth, and inspired for the reason that it inspires life?

The ultimate Authority in religion will be admitted by all to be God himself. If man be intrinsically detached from God, it is evident that the divine quality must be conveyed through external device. But if the divine and the human are in normal contact, Authority must come through the living channels of the soul and not through hearsay or outward constituted authority.

Protestantism, historically, in its essence was an avowed appeal to reason. In its larger sense, reason includes not merely the logical faculty, but all the higher perceiving and interpreting forces of the soul. Modern scepticism, now so prevalent, comes as the penalty for, and reaction from the claim of an unerring literalism which was the logical successor of the Papal assumption. The sceptic says to the literalist: Your Bible gives authority to hold slaves, practice polygamy, and it sanctions war and revenge, and the literalist cannot deny this from his own method of interpretation.

Truth never can be in conflict with truth. Over and over again, that which has been assumed

to be truth taught in the Bible has been found to be in opposition to undoubted verity in science and exact knowledge. A series of ignominious retreats has therefore followed the champions of traditionalism. Persecution, long so bitter, now having been thrust out by the spirit of the age, the search for truth can be full and untrammelled. "The truth shall make you free."

There is a higher Authority than the world, or even the Church has generally recognized. It comes from God, or the Divine Spirit working through man. Jesus "spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The message of the prophet is positive, and carries intrinsic self-attestation while the utterance of the priest, entangled in form and ritual is uncertain. The seer cuts loose from the trammels of environment and the uncertainty of tradition, and makes himself a channel for the divinity within. His message touches a responsive chord in the heart of every hearer. He deals with axioms rather than unknown quantities. But his is not an exclusive order, for the prophetic instinct is at least latent in every human copy of the "divine image." The temple of old was cleared, not by the fear of "a whip of small cords," but by the terrible dignity

of truth. Barriers have been erected between God and the soul which must be burned away, even though they may have religious labels. The leadings of the seer need no supporting argument because they are armed with conviction. Although the Prophet of Nazareth fulfilled and endorsed all the truth which had come into expression before his time, he was regarded as the typical iconoclast.


It follows that that Authority which has the signet of the Infinite, needs no system of apologetics or exegesis, because it shines by its own light. That inner and self-attesting truth for which martyrs were willing to suffer was a matter of no uncertainty. "The pure in heart shall see God." Reality will stand out before them full-orbed, subject to no doubtful quest. The radical transition in the recognized seat of the ultimate Criterion which is now in progress is a return, or rather an advance to the ideal of Jesus.

As man stands at the apex of the universal order, he must embody the truest and best of the divine creative fruitfulness. The authors of the Bible have their very important place, but to rank all the writings of other ages as relatively secular or profane is unwarranted. The full realization of truth and authority is an endless process, and we

are in, and a part of that process. As Jesus severed the bonds of Jewish traditionalism and emancipated himself from the bondage of an external order and cult, so this wonderful age is lifting the banner of a spiritual democracy.

To cognize the Authority which is at the zenith, and feel its more vital relations, one must apprehend the great evolutionary spiritual trend, and realize that he, himself, is a product of the past. Things are both old and new at the same time. To move forward with the universal drift is to anchor consciousness to the Eternal. Real Authority is an assertion of the divine Inmost. To arrest its free expression and put it in the congealed form of dogma is to deaden its vital authority and smother its life.

Not the verbiage, but the glowing truth which flows through the Bible is infallible. There is but one form of captivity to which it is our privilege to yield, and that is a sweet subservience to spiritual ideals. They not only mold us into their image but also constitute our highest Authority. The higher selfhood is crowned with its own authority and is above theology and dogma, for these linger upon the subordinate intellectual plane. True authority is, least of all, arbitrary, and true



liberty is not license or disorder. The ultimate and perfected form of government will not depend upon external legislation, civil or religious, but upon that which is graphically written upon the tablets of the soul. In the final outcome, submission to the supreme Authority will be neither more nor less than unrestrained self-expression. All objective pressure is to be relaxed and man is to shape himself to the divine Image and Likeness, as primarily installed.

XII

SALVATION

THE all-embracing theme and purpose of the Bible is human salvation. Not only Christianity, but practically all other systems of religion claim for their main object the saving of souls. The idea of two unlike conditions, one beneficent, constructive, and harmonious, and the other the reverse, thereby making an essential dualism in life and destiny, has been almost universal. Even monism—the doctrine of one—whether in ancient or modern philosophic form, has its positive and negative aspects and sharp contrasts. The power of choice by the individual, and the results depending thereupon, form the vital issue of religion, ethics, and, in a great degree, of philosophy. Even pure science, if defined as exact truth, might postulate salvation as attained harmony with environment.

“What shall I do to be saved,” has been the cry of the soul through all the ages, and an intense quest for its true answer is universal. Its trans-

cent importance always has and will force it to the front. Not only in the problem of ultimate human destiny, but in a thousand subordinate forms it is always present. Men crave not only final salvation but they want to be saved every day.

The popular idea of being saved, no less in ancient than in modern times, is an escape from, or avoidance of punishment. At the most, this is only a negative aspect. To save the soul, implies not only deliverance from the bondage of sin and error, but a conservation and development of positive good.

As the result of biblical literalism, the theology of reward and punishment has been arbitrary and unnatural. But at the present time, owing to the decay of a belief in a future dramatic judgment, a formal verdict, and a localized heaven and hell, the whole subject has lost most of its seriousness and is lightly regarded. A few decades ago when these dogmas were firmly held, and imposed by undoubted authority, the community was often definitely divided into two classes — the saved and the lost. But with the general modern prevalence of a belief in universal salvation, or at least of continued progression, to which the orthodox bodies

take little exception, the reaction has been great. One extreme has been followed by the other. The former anxious solicitation about making one's "calling and election sure," has been succeeded by a careless indifference and a feeling that judgment will be only favorable. Ideas of grave responsibility are lightly dismissed, and the descriptive terms in former use regarding retribution, often call out sarcasm if not derision. Reward and punishment, as literally taught and imposed are gone, and their place is not yet filled by any realization of the depth and seriousness of a truer psychological and subjective view. But every discarded dogma, even if literally untrue, has, hidden back of it, some inner law or truth, often of startling importance. The transfer of what has seemed literal and objective to the inner consciousness, really deepens its significance.

Theology without the light of related psychological laws and principles is radically incomplete. The present philosophy of the sub-conscious mind—that great lifelong accumulation which is below the ordinary cognizance of consciousness—resolves many arbitrary doctrines of the past. Day by day every one is making up his own record, providing for his own judgment, and fastening within

himself conditions of specific moral quality. In the light of a greater awakening, men will be brought face to face with their stored-up inquisition, and the exposure will be searching and complete. Heavenly and hellish products are psychologically and scientifically engraved.

There is an occasional experience in this life which throws much light upon the coming judgment, when the sub-conscious realm is lighted up and stands out before us. At rare times, perhaps most often made known by a resuscitated person after a drowning experience, the inner curtain is drawn back, and the conscious mind gets a quick panoramic view of the thoughts and conduct of a lifetime. This phenomenon though rare is very significant. It proves that no thought-image or mental impression has been obliterated, but is only temporarily out of sight. The dramatic symbolism of Revelation which portrays the general judgment, the great white throne, the spectacular gathering of all tribes and peoples and tongues, the opening of the seals of the Book, the sounding of the angels, the golden streets and precious stones, the pit of the abyss, and the smoke from it, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the great wealth of other imagery, find their solution and interpreta-

tion in the unappreciated human sub-conscious domain. Doubtless few theologians would now be found who literalize the Book of Revelation, which is nearly all made up of striking delineations in the nature of the few examples above quoted. But they have a meaning, and the only possible interpretation, must be found in the mysteries of the chambers of the soul.

In the light of the subtle principles which pervade the microcosmic mind of man, what a responsibility is wrapped up in simple thinking! Every mental image is like a photographic negative which stamps its impress — not upon paper, stone, or steel — but upon infinitely more durable material. There is a continuous creation, and its products are ever living and growing. Nothing has been so lightly regarded as a thought, but think of each volition making history. The “every idle word” for which men shall be judged, when interpreted, is a startling psychological truth. The judgment, from being a great formal gathering, arbitrary in character, located in the distant future, and in some unknown part of the cosmos, comes home, and is close fitting and virtually continuous. Every one, or rather the divine element in him, is rendering a continuous and unending verdict, even though not

yet opened up to consciousness. The sheep are passing to the right hand, and the goats to the left. Every man contains and retains all he has been with growing emphasis. When fleshly coverings and limitations are removed, we shall be like a ship which has its manifest nailed up, plainly showing the composition of its cargo.

Since Professor Drummond, as a pioneer among modern theologians, gave to the world his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," the progress of religious opinion has been rapid. That concept of the Deity which likened him to an Oriental Sovereign — capricious and ruling from without — is fading. The spiritual realm is within man, and this is where God's beautiful and orderly economy manifests its activity and finds its expression. Any scheme, consisting of a purchased release, or an artificial severing of cause and effect, is plainly against reason and justice. Were God's original plans unexpectedly defeated? Though greatly modified in the present view, such a "plan of salvation" remains of life size in the creeds.

But from the evolutionary and psychological point of view, we must concede to past conventional thought a necessary place and time, as a stage of progress toward something higher. It


must be passed through, and therefore has a kind of negative, disciplinary, and educational goodness. Nothing is finished, because there is a continuous becoming. The "Judgment Day" never began and never will end. Every principle, opinion, belief, and theory is being tested, measured, and given its award. The scene may not be so sensuously dramatic as that which literalism has accepted in prose, enshrined in poetry, and spread in glowing color upon canvas, but it has a deeper truth. The realism and literalism depicted by the art of the old masters of the mediæval period, and the profound impression made by the Miltonian literature are wonderfully expressive of an era of human thought, literal, severe, and intense. Such a judgment is now utterly discredited, but it had a meaning, and in the evolutionary order, formed a zone which had to be traversed before the goal of a higher and purer ideal could be reached. The Bar of God is set up in man. "The Kingdom of God is within you." How then shall we be "saved"? Saved from what? From a low false consciousness; from the Adamic concept that we are bodies; from a slavery to conditions, limitations, and negations; from mental pictures of evil and its power; from beliefs in antagonisms, weaknesses, diseases, and

adversities; from selfishness, hate, grief, and fear; from pessimism and materialism. These are thought-creations which if allowed to ripen bring forth self-made hellish conditions. The immutable divine economy has placed the judge, judgment, and executioner within. Nothing in the whole universe of God can bring real harm from the outside. The God-voice in the soul of man, though still and small is a judicial utterance, distinct in its teaching, and to listen, is to discover the self and its bearings.

While nothing inherently good can be destroyed, man can lose that which to him seems to be himself. If one builds up a consciousness, or creates a thought-world, wherein he links the ego to the perishable and unreal (the "wood, hay, and stubble") he loses his seeming soul. Through a vital connection he builds these things into his personality, and when they are swept away he has little by which to recognize himself. The inmost self is saved "as by fire," but the selfhood which he has created with all his familiar environment is lost. He has not brought the deeper individuality into recognition. For an age-long period, or until a new consciousness is developed, such a one is in a denuded condition. He has built a structure upon

the sand of negation, and it is swept away. Does such a judicial discipline seem severe? When its origin is truly discerned, severe though it be, its processes may be reversed and its educational beneficence made plain. Then the soul will return from its mistaken by-way, and with dearly bought experience be drawn toward the Father's House. God is love and imposes arbitrary sentence upon no man. Man passes it upon himself and so finally makes the great discovery that retribution is in his very nature. Penalty, though of vital moment, is radically different from the arbitrary, vindictive, and lawless hell of former dogma. Life is conserved but will be entered with conditions of partial blindness, lameness, and deafness, self-imposed through ignorance or carelessness. But limitations will be finally outgrown.

The stuff of which character is made is tested and fused, but the pure metal will remain unconsumed and unharmed. The biblical warnings, which are too numerous for present quotation, will be found, in their summing up, to be in harmony with these conclusions. They warn us, in effect, that if through a disregard of spiritual law we hold back until a sensuous consciousness has solidified around us, its removal will strip us bare.



It is possible now to build an environment of the Real. Working with the law we no longer "kick against the pricks." More than this, we gain a backing of its supernal energy because salvation is normal. It is a harmonious fitting of our own constitution into the universal constitution.

The characteristic of the present era is intellectual activity and development. This, though well in its place, is not a savior, but such an opinion prevails. Falling into the great world-current, even religion has largely been brought down to that plane. It has been rendered into a system of belief, or an assent to certain approved statements. But vastly more than that, salvation consists of the unfoldment of the higher part of man, or rather of the real self. Even theology, in the ordinary sense is secondary. To be saved completely, involves the emergence of the divine selfhood from latency into self-recognition and manifestation. It requires more than an intellectual belief in the personal Jesus, or an acceptance of his merits vicariously. It must include the normal development of the intrinsic and eternal Christ-mind or quality. While this was most fully expressed through the personality of Jesus, it knows no limitation, local or historic.

An intellectual giant may be a spiritual weakling. He requires "saving" no less than his more ignorant brother who seems to be so much below him. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." Whatever is idolized, or stands in the place of that which is supreme, is a perversion. There is a normal proportion, good in itself, but its inversion transforms it into evil. Every one needs to be saved from an undue dominance of what is subordinate in moral and spiritual grade. The business man needs to be saved from his business, the lawyer from his law, and the capitalist from his capital. Even the scientist, the naturalist, or the philosopher must not give *himself* to his profession. The soul should not take firm root in anything less than the Eternal. It is not enough to send one's theories, his philosophy, his beliefs, his theology, or even his religion, higher; he must go there himself. Full salvation involves the evolution of the spiritual self-consciousness, the building of a soul-structure of imperishable material. The ego must form an organic union with eternal and living verities.

In the "judgment day" those things which pass to the "left hand" in the last analysis are

composed of negation and lack the divine basis of reality. It represents the objective nothingness of that which relatively is evil. It is the educational background where we subjectively build up appearances, specters, and imaginings, only finally to learn that they are men of straw. It is the darkness through which by contrast we distinguish and finally appreciate the light.

We may then welcome the "day of judgment" and even retribution, for it, with all its pains, will come only as we need its purification. This knowledge of its ultimatum will measurably strip it of its terrors. The pains of the fiery furnace will be bearable when we are persuaded that their age-long outcome and purpose is good. Thus we at length find that God, as Love, is All in All.

XIII

HISTORY, MANUSCRIPTS, AND TRANSLATIONS

It is not the purpose, nor within the scope of this volume to attempt any exhaustive or technical study of the books of the Old and New Testaments. That work is being done by trained specialists, and requires a peculiar equipment which is not common, and to which the author makes no claim. The general inquirer who would learn the truth concerning the making of the Bible in its present form must give due regard to the best obtainable authority, carefully weighing the evidence and probability, so far as is possible. Actual history, and formal proof for much which it would be desirable to know, are meager, and so far as spiritual values are concerned the internal evidence is by far the most important. The limited survey which follows is compiled from a careful comparison between the most scholarly and well recognized authorities who are conservative in their general conclusions. They are reverent in spirit and con-

structive in temper. Critical and technical research shows that the ancient Hebrew traditions are often unreliable, and that careful discrimination is indispensable.


The Pentateuch, or first five books of the Old Testament, the authorship of which for so long was attributed to Moses, is now generally believed to be a collective growth probably compiled at a much later period. Varying literary style and construction, tone and motive, the inclusion of scattered epochs, the account of Moses' death, and various other reasons make the above conclusion logical, if not entirely positive. The book of Joshua bears a close relation to the Pentateuch, being a continuation of it in general character.

The order in which the various books of the Old Testament appear is no indication of the chronological order of their production. That noble epic which so grandly portrays the process of soul development, named Job, is thought to be one of the most ancient of the biblical books. The book of Judges includes the narratives of the successive Judges of Israel gathered by some unknown compiler. The histories given in the two books of Samuel are thought to be by some writer, perhaps belonging to the court of David. First

and Second Kings, and also Chronicles bear evidence of the authorship of some unknown scribe. Ezra and Nehemiah, which contain an account of the lives and work of the prophets named, were evidently written after the Return, and are thought to be the work of some Jewish chronicler of official rank. The poetic collection called the Psalms, a national book of religious songs, bears evidence of varied authorship in addition to that of David. The compilation of wise sayings named Proverbs, though called after Solomon, was probably the work of various writers who lived both before and after him.

Of the remaining books of the Old Testament, which form an important part of the Sacred Writings of ancient Israel, there is also much uncertainty as to their exact authorship and respective dates. At the best there can be but an approximation to the actual historic facts. The latest and most careful criticism makes the authorship of fourteen of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament fairly sure with parts of some others.

The authors, as well as the Scribes of ancient Israel, were mainly compilers and copyists. The writings of the nation, whether religious, political, or historical, were common property. There was



no copyright law or custom of literary ownership. Individuals as they were moved or "inspired" added their quota to the common stock. Valuation was internal rather than dependent upon the name of the writer.

As to the authorship of the books of the New Testament, there is a much greater certainty. The four Evangelists whose names are given to their Gospels undoubtedly wrote or edited them in great degree. Luke was also the author of the Acts. The letters or Epistles, with the exception of Hebrews, bear the names of their writers. But the reader of the Bible who peruses it for its spirit and inspirational quality, places little emphasis upon authorship. As the power of the Bible lies deeper than the letter or any external authority, the earnest seeker for truth need not concern himself if some former or traditional suppositions are disturbed, or even overthrown. Each writer, whatever his name or official standing, is the unique channel for a spiritual message. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Whoever may be the mouthpiece, it is the Spirit that speaketh unto the churches. That the glad tidings are colored or modified by each human expositor makes it more peculiarly fitting for different classes, and for all

sorts and conditions of men. It would seem that even a glance at the history of the manuscripts which form the basis of the Bible, as we have it to-day, should be sufficient to dispel any idea of "inerrancy" and of homage to the letter.


There is not the slightest reason to think that the Evangelists made any record of the words of Jesus as they fell from his lips. The closest investigation shows that the earliest of the Gospels was not written until from thirty-five to fifty years had elapsed after the recorded transactions. Any accuracy of language beyond a mingling of memory and general tradition is improbable. About fifty years passed after the active ministry of Jesus before the Acts of the Apostles was written. In the meantime, a theory of the meaning and purpose of his life had become general and met with acceptance. Thus it is evident that the dogma of the infallible perfection and inspiration of the text of this, as of other parts of the Bible, is unreasonable if not impossible. The mere fact that there is a Revised Version giving more correct and often modified meaning to many passages in translation should be conclusive as to the theory of inerrancy.

If infallibility in the letter of the Bible existed anywhere, it must have been inherent in the orig-

inal manuscripts, as they came from the hands of their authors. But even were it admitted that they were but amanuenses receiving the word by direct dictation, it remains that the writings were long ago scattered and lost beyond recovery, and that their gathering and unification has been fragmentary and uncertain. The most thorough scholarship is now employed in a reverent effort to find out the purpose of their messages and the motive and conditions under which they gained currency. The significant fact is, that these men had vital spiritual truth, a knowledge of which the world greatly needed. The outward verbiage through which it was conveyed is but the husk which encloses the fruit. It would be as reasonable to identify divinity with every detail of their manners and costume as with every form and peculiarity of their diction.

In ancient times any book was called a bible. It is believed that Chrysostom, in the fifth century, was the first to employ the Greek Biblia (the books), as applied to the Hebrew sacred writings, and so it came into use in the Eastern Church. They usually were made in the form of a scroll and the text was on parchment or more commonly papyrus, a kind of paper made from a water-plant.

Each copy, and there were comparatively few, was made by a scribe or regular copyist. The books were called "The Law and the Prophets," or "Holy Scriptures," before the inclusion of the writings afterwards designated as the New Testament. The durability of the books which were written on papyrus was quite limited. The composition of the books of the Old Testament spreads over a period of about twelve hundred years, and they were gathered somewhat in their present form about a century before the Christian Era. None of the earliest manuscripts of the Bible have survived, and only fragmentary copies of copies, scattered and considerably incoherent have been preserved. The oldest existing New Testament manuscripts were made hundreds of years later than those by the original writers. Only by careful comparison of widely scattered remains can the text of the originals be approximated. Nearly two thousand manuscripts of portions of the Old Testament are now in existence, none of them being older than about 1,000 A.D. The most careful examination of them has shown a variation in about 150,000 passages, though nearly all the differences are unimportant. While a superstitious veneration of the letter strongly aided pre-




servation, there are indications that before the text assumed its present form the versions in other tongues show differences which cannot be traced in any manuscript now in existence.

The writings which make up the New Testament had no such systematic copying as was done by the older professional Scribes. Though so much more recent than "The Law and the Prophets," their variations are yet more numerous. Of the fifteen hundred or more partial New Testament manuscripts now preserved, dating from the fourth to the sixteenth century, the variations are important and the original signatures of the authors have been copied and re-copied indefinitely. They are generally in Greek, though sometimes accompanied by a Latin translation. Besides the regular manuscripts before mentioned, early translations were made into the tongues of other countries where the Hebrew or Greek was not spoken. Through careful comparison these have been useful in confirming or correcting the differences before noticed.

The version of the Bible called the Vulgate, from the old Latin, was undertaken by Jerome at the order of Pope Damasus in A.D. 382. In the sixteenth century the Protestant and Roman

Catholic Churches took different courses as to their chosen versions of the Bible. The Lutheran party after considerable controversy settled upon the pure and full biblical canon as is held by the Protestants of to-day. The same held true of the Swiss or Reformed party, and through them, and by way of the Westminster Confession of Faith, we have received our present body of sacred Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church, in its Council of Trent in A.D. 1545, adopted the Old Testament Apocrypha as an integral part of the Old Testament canon. In 1582 a New Testament was issued by the English Catholic Church at Rheims, and the Old Testament in 1609 at Douay, France. Before the latter publication, the standard text had been fixed and proclaimed by the Holy See. Several private revisions have since been made by scholars in the Catholic Church, but as the matter had been already officially settled they received no sanction.

The Gospels are not as much direct histories of Jesus, as impressions, traditions, and ideals of him which grew up after the close of his earthly career. He left no manuscript, and so far as known no directions or arrangements for the copying and promulgation of his sayings. There was no logi-




cal motive for any effort toward their preservation among his followers, for they expected his early reappearance, the setting up of his kingly authority, and the establishment of the national supremacy. When at length the records began to be made and the traditions revived, it is evident that variations instead of one fixed account would appear. Each memory, even of the same events, would have its special emphasis and color. But the general ideal of all would be Messiahship. When at length the ideal of a temporal reign gradually began to give place to that of a more spiritual and moral leadership, his mission became increasingly clarified. Still later this was again obscured by theological dogmatism and speculation.

The idea that the Bible in some miraculous way came down from heaven in complete form, has filled the imagination of men, even in spite of its known history and certain gradual accretion. Miracles, with superstition, were grouped around it, and they increased with time and distance. The Book steadily took on the character of a shrine and oracle, and there is no possible doubt about its growth, step by step. After the time of Ezra, the Scribe, the professional exponents of the biblical

economy copied and excluded by a process of natural selection. There was no technical test or exact standard, but the problem of the Old Testament canon solved itself through the spiritual consciousness of men. About the time of the advent of Jesus, Josephus, and the Hebrew authorities generally, recognized as sacred substantially the same writings which are included to-day. But, as before indicated, other books, apocryphal in character, were ranked next to them, and afterwards often classed or confused with them.

The books of final selection were called the canonical ones, and the others the uncanonical. Canonization signifies measured, approved. When officially sanctioned by Church councils, any religious rules or laws become canonical. At the time of the Reformation when the Protestant churches transferred their authority from the Church to the Bible, the distinction with them became fixed. But since that time the Apocrypha, or uncanonical books often have been used as an accompaniment to the regular Scriptures. References are frequent in the Old Testament to other books outside the canon.

The canon of the New Testament was as much a matter of growth and natural selection as the Old. It was a gradual and unconscious shaping



based upon inner vitality rather than external authority. The vote of councils was but a formal confirmation of the general verdict, as spontaneously arrived at.

Jesus proclaimed not a code of morals, or ethics, but a living gospel, not words to be recorded, but divinity in humanity. From recollection and reputation, his disciples from time to time made records for preservation of the sayings and doings of the three years' ministry. About the same time, Paul's letters to the churches, outlining the practical application of the words of Jesus, became enshrined in the memory and consciousness of the growing numbers of Christians, Hebrew and Gentile. The four Gospels, though aiming to portray the same experiences, are so unlike in tone and standpoint that they fully reveal the peculiar individuality of the writers.

Besides the letters of Paul, other apostles and teachers wrote their interpretations of the life and words of Jesus. And thus the isolated and fragmentary parts of the New Testament at length became crystallized, and in due time canonized. But the process was long and slow, and accompanied by much speculation and controversy.

The Council of Carthage about the close of the

fourth century ratified the canon for the churches of the West, substantially in its present order and form. But there remained some moral doubt, especially regarding the Hebrews, Second Peter, and James, and this uncertainty was felt even as late as the Reformation, and was shared by Luther and Calvin. The Roman Catholic Church has always regarded the Bible as secondary in authority, a book needing official interpretation and explanation. Supreme authority being vested in the Pope and Church, the common people were restrained from direct contact with the Book. The right of private judgment was unrecognized and priestly control supreme.

The first crude effort to put the Bible into English vernacular was made by Cædmon in the seventh century, in poetic style. It was not a translation but a continuous story told by him in the very imperfect language of that day. A little later an effort at translation was made by Bedé, who at length became known as "the monk of Jarrow." He put the Gospel of St. John into the very imperfect English of the time, and its teaching was a development among the roots of early English literature. But the beginnings of the written Anglo-Saxon tongue were well nigh ob-

literated by the Norman Conquest. A new language was gradually forming, but not until the fourteenth century did it become coherent and general, largely through Chaucer and his *Canterbury Tales*. About this time Wycliffe planned to produce an English Bible, so much needed by the common people. He was summoned before the papal tribunal by the Archbishop, but being befriended by royalty, at length, in spite of ecclesiastical opposition he produced the desired translation. With the assistance of his "poor priests" a large number of copies at great labor and expense were made by hand, of which more than a hundred of the first edition are still in existence. He was bitterly persecuted while he lived, and nearly half a century after his death, by ecclesiastical decree, his body was disinterred, burned, and the ashes cast out upon the river which ran past his church. Persecution after persecution followed, and it became a capital crime to read or possess a copy of the English Scriptures. In hundreds of cases torture and death were the result of such offenses. Another century brought the art of printing, and the ability to read became more general. The next martyr to biblical translation was William Tyndale, a student of Oxford, who translated the

New Testament from the Greek. After years of persecution he was strangled and burned at the stake in 1536. In the meantime, though contraband and possessed only in secret, copies of the Scriptures steadily multiplied. Soon after Tyndale's death, Coverdale issued the first entire English Bible. Other versions followed, founded upon that of Tyndale. A little later an edition was printed in Geneva, when for the first time a division was made into chapters and verses. Toward the close of the sixteenth century, the Bible in England met with royal favor and popular demand. Persecution ceased.

Early in the seventeenth century, a new and authorized version was prepared under royal patronage. King James appointed a number of eminent scholars, and through them after great care and labor, the work in due time was completed. In 1611, the version since known as the King James Bible was issued, and it has remained as the Protestant standard down to recent times.

But the modern English is changing so rapidly, both in terms and in their significance that the need of a version, more perfect in adaptation was strongly felt both in England and America during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Thou-

sands of archaic and unsuitable words had been retained, and with hundreds of additional manuscripts, and vastly superior scholarship it was felt that a version was possible which would be far more correct and better suited to modern requirements than the time-honored volume which has come down from the days of King James.

In 1870, through the coöperative efforts of companies of eminent scholars in England and America, and after about fifteen years of careful study and general review, the Revised Version was completed and introduced in both countries. As to exact forms of expression, a large number of differences of opinion, mainly unimportant, developed between the English and American collaborators, but the text preferred by the former was adopted with marginal references of the variations for convenience. But in 1901, an edition was published by Thomas Nelson and Sons in New York, which embodies the complete text in the form preferred by the American translators. It is called the American Standard Edition.

There has been a feeling that the Book could not be trusted to stand alone — upon its merits — and that some kind of official explanation should accompany it. Exegeses and commentaries have

been multiplied, and theologies have been invoked to "steady the Ark of the Lord" by supernatural props and defenses. But its inherent spiritual quality and power should be sufficiently plain to show its divine character. Its substantial utility resides, not in its rules, doctrines, or thou shalt nots, but in its ability to awaken the spiritual consciousness in man. Amid all the mutations of the text of the Book, in the attempt to adapt it to the ever-changing significance of language which is in a constant state of flux, no one need mistake the inner spiritual import, which, like an unseen unitary strand of gold, runs from the beginning to the end of the Sacred Word.

XIV

FAITH AND THE UNSEEN

THERE is no principle made more prominent in the Bible than the saving power of faith. It is everywhere presented as the vital force in man, the motive power of the religious life. "According to thy faith be it unto thee," was an expression so often used by Jesus — literally or in substance — that it may be regarded as spiritually axiomatic. Though employed by him, perhaps more distinctively in reference to the healing of disease, its wider application is everywhere implied. Faith is the mainspring of all progress. Only by its exercise can we live with vigor. It is the fountain of all joy, action, and hope, and its dynamic is exercised upon unseen verities. Faith in God, in his infinite intelligence and rule, is the great power which moves the world. Its relation to the growth and upliftment of the human soul is as strong and intimate as that of the sun to the animate natural world. If doubt and unbelief are allowed to interpose, a chill takes the place of

warmth, and the glory of life departs. Like a landscape over which a frost has past its beauty is withered.

It is not easy to interpret faith and its exercise in that which is unseen, into modern expressive terms. It is unfortunate, that to many the language of Scripture has become formal and rigid, and thus its adaptability to the actual life of to-day is weakened. It seems so far away to the daily consciousness that it needs a new translation to bring it into closer touch with the feeling of mankind. As a real force, which is governed by exact law, it is both scientific and cultivable. The recognition of the reign of "natural law in the spiritual world," as the overshadowing truth of the divine order, is the glory of the recent time. Faith is not mere expectation, or hope, but present substance. The highest tribute which was paid to the eminent characters of the Bible was that they were filled with faith, and it has lost none of its old-time potency. The illumined will is the divine energy working in the inner man. It takes hold of forces which are infinite, and nothing can withstand its might. "And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou

planted in the sea ; and it would have obeyed you." (Luke xvii, 6) These words of Jesus are an example of Oriental hyperbole, and their symbolic meaning could not well be stronger. They constitute a description of power with a superlative emphasis.

But there is no other fundamental principle so lightly rated by modern and conventional thought as faith. No other important quality of soul is so little understood, whether viewed abstractly, or in practical working. It is popularly estimated as a kind of unreasonable credulity, or perhaps simply as a vague hope for something which is distant. It is felt that for remote biblical times, it perhaps was fitting, but that it has little place in a scientific age. As a common term it has largely passed out of use, and "philosophical idealism" implies about as much of its inner significance as is thought to be in accord with the spirit of the age. It is no reflection upon "the scientific method" to suggest that the scope of its application should be broadened, so that its exercise be not limited to the intellectual and sensuous realm. The deeper problems of the soul are as amenable to orderly investigation as those of chemistry and physics. Psychology, subjective activity, consciousness, and

spiritual evolution have their inherent laws which may be systematically studied and found coherent.

Faith, as a dominant force in the invisible realm, appears elusive and unreal. Whatever there is of it seems like a harmless enthusiasm which is volatile, or perhaps a temperamental peculiarity. Rather it is a mystic energy, boundless in its resources and of wonderful utility and potential increase. One may naturally inquire: How can I have more faith or spiritual certitude than I now possess, except it be upon some new presentation of outward evidence? But its growth is from within. A prisoner who is wholly shut off from Bible, book, or personal communication may cultivate and greatly increase it. Internal nourishment may be adequate without word or hint from objective sources. Evidence which is external to the soul may be useful, but it is not indispensable. The roots of faith are bedded in the recesses of being. On the contrary, trust in the things of sense depends upon observation or testimony upon its own plane. Because many travelers have visited China, and told us of its characteristic features, and of their own experiences while there, we believe in the existence of such a country without

a personal visit. This kind of belief is in multi-form use in the daily current of life.

Spiritual assurance is an achievement rather than a gift. Everything has its purchase price, and unseen verities are no exception. A positive conviction of the reality of spiritual values must largely lack immediate external confirmation. In the matter of fact atmosphere of the present era one may well ask himself, how far it is practicable to "walk by faith and not by sight." Just here is a focal point where the Bible should become a mirror for the life of to-day.

Far above all dogma, theology, and circumstance which men discover in Holy Writ, there shines out the towering principle of divine assurance and overruling good. A well grounded confidence in the issues of life is the exponent of spiritual sanity. It is the sounding keynote which is dominant in the history of the Old Dispensation and the New. Jesus did not teach doctrinal theology, but in season and out he discoursed upon the value of vigor in the inner life. This formed the substance of his oft repeated aphorisms and was enforced with all the wealth of Oriental imagery. The Pentecostal demonstration which followed his departure into the unseen,

was an object lesson of the force of faith over sight. Its dominance over doctrine, in the Sacred Word, is as marked as that of the sun over the moon in the solar system.

The Bible is valuable to-day just in proportion that modern conditions are adjusted to its truth. Its inelastic letter does not fit different ages, but its deeper energizing force is perennial. Sectarian opinions, scholastic conceptions, and ethical standards come and go, but the divine dynamic which is stored in the soul is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. The present profound lack is in the motive power of love, with faith, Godward and manward. A more direct connection with the universal "power-house" is needed. As a spiritual balance-wheel the divine impetus is even more important in an intellectual age than in one of inferior technical development. Untempered knowledge becomes top-heavy for lack of subjective poise.

In the language of Paul, faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the proving of things not seen. After things are seen, proving has lost its office. The future is not hoped and waited for, but brought into the present. The spiritual will is the helmsman of the voyage of life. Spiritual

certitude deals with what is yet unmanifest, and in proportion to its intensity it brings possibility into actuality.

Any thorough study of the successive strata of the soul discloses the intuitive powers as higher in rank than those of the purely intellectual faculty. But this is no disparagement of the latter, in its own province, for there should be coöperation and an intermingling. With all the wonders of modern scientific development, the present era is notable for unbelief and faithlessness. The conclusions of the Spirit seem like foolishness to the logician. Even "a sign from heaven" to find acceptance must pass through the retorts of the laboratory. Spiritual laws and forces elude us because we demand evidence which does not belong to them. Analysis is useful in physics and chemistry, but spiritual values cannot be laid open for dissection.

The Primitive Church was childlike and technically unproficient, but there was the exercise of a far more prevailing faith and corresponding "wonderful works" than this age knows how to command. In worldly lore it was but a low development, but with all our feeling of great superiority we might learn much from it. The waning of

the inner glow of the soul is a loss which is beyond estimate. Dogma may be recited and receive assent, but it does not furnish spiritual invigoration.

A well rounded faith has no element of uncertainty, for its clear-sightedness reveals credentials which are self-attesting. Its potency also blossoms into visible blessing because it has radiant energy. Assurance in God, linked to trust in the spiritual selfhood, makes an invincible combination. Through its channel in the human soul flows the divine potential.

Almost the only reproof which Jesus administered to his immediate followers may be summed up in the words so often repeated: "O ye of little faith!" Like the world of to-day they were prone to walk by sight. Until the inner fountain is unsealed, spiritual assurance is feeble and formal. The lower currents of our mental environment chill and paralyze the higher life, while a cultivated faith will reflect back upon us all the warmth we put in, supplemented by a constant growth. In order to a realization of spiritual values, isolation from the world and contact with the divine, at least at special seasons, is necessary. Divine assurance is the grand ideal. To seek

its companionship with an undoubting spirit, involves a positive response and provides for its steady possession.

Our righteous judgment of any one must be in the light of his aims and not entirely based upon his completed attainments. He is the actual owner of the fruitage of his ideals, even though they now be only in the bud. By faith they are potential, and are actually wrapped up within him. Correct spiritual accounting credits him with what he has set his heart upon, for faith brings the treasures of the future into the soul's present assets. Contrary to general opinion the riches of the idealist are very real. Beauty is no more an abstract quality with him but practically his very own. God is not only God, but his God. Through the legitimate ownership conferred by faith, Paul's sweeping declaration: "All things are yours!" is sober truth. If such a realization appears like an impossible attainment, it is of the utmost importance that we begin its cultivation now. To the material consciousness, spiritual riches drawn from the future seems like a mystery, if not a negation. No argument or doctrine will prove its validity, for only the heart can understand its power.

That concentrative thought is creative, and that it may be a powerful auxiliary to spiritual certitude, is a law which is but slightly appreciated. But through its exercise consciousness may be reconstructed. Take an illustration. One is well convinced that love is a high privilege and duty. He should love his friend, neighbor, and even enemy, but he fails to have any feeling or warm sensibility in that direction. It does not come spontaneously, and he would like to increase it, but does not discern the means. How shall it be awakened from latency and become manifest, at least in his own consciousness? Concentrated thought upon it tends to make it live, in and before him. There grows up a subjective nucleus which is powerful and effective. In due time it will find objective overflow through fitting channels. As a secondary creator man may thus reform his own consciousness. By immutable law he approximates toward the likeness of the "pattern in the mount." "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Paul, in his directions for growth, showed himself to be a psychological expert. He said: "Think on these things." The things mentioned were definite ideals. One may choose and hold them until they stamp their deep impress

upon his life and consciousness, and virtually become a part of him.

The spiritual realm is all about us, though intangible to our physical equipment. "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Our deepest and most real life, here and now, is within the realm of spirit. But the daily thought is almost entirely of the things of sense. While Omnipresent Spirit is in and around us, we reason and converse almost entirely in terms of matter. The supersensuous realm seems distant, or is relegated to the dim future. We are like the fishes and the lark :

" ' Oh, where is the sea ? ' the fishes cried,
As they swam the crystal clearness through ;
' We've heard from of old of the ocean's tide,
And we long to look on the waters blue.
The wise ones speak of an infinite sea,
Oh, who can tell us if such there be.' "

" The lark flew up in the morning bright,
And sung and balanced on sunny wings;
And this was its song: ' I see the light,
I look on the world of beautiful things ;
But flying or singing everywhere,
In vain I have searched to find the air.' "

The real life beneath the seething surface of the sensuous plane is lived in God. Spirit is the great reality. Our seen environment which appears so firm and enduring is like a shadow in comparison with that subtle energy which forms its basis. This orderly force builds up forms and blossoms in seen organisms, while its great current, which is not now in manifestation flows on unspent and undiminished. That which is objectively solidified is but an infinitesimal part of the great Whole. No dust can be found which has not over and over again been seized, animated, and shaped by its vital force.

O, how the world is bound and deceived by the limitations of the seen! Human traditions, institutions, and activities are benumbed by materialism and pessimism. Conventions tether us to innumerable hitching-posts, and we are held to a little exhausted range for sustenance. But on various occasions, and under certain conditions, glimpses of the supersensuous flash themselves upon us. The Bible often speaks of the awakening of the spiritual perception as the "opening of the eyes." Blindness is the common condition. When St. Paul first experienced a vivid impress of spiritual illumination, we read: "And straightway there

fell from his eyes, as it were, scales and he received his sight." Not literal scales, but "as it were" scales. How expressive the Oriental similitude!

God is Spirit (not "a spirit," as incorrectly rendered) and if man be made in his image and likeness, he, in his real being must be spirit also. The seen body is man's instrument, but it is not man. Our souls breathe the spiritual atmosphere of God's immanence. His concrete activity is in all the higher processes of man's inner nature. There is a subtle but normal affinity between the divine and the human. Men have sought everywhere outside to find God, vainly neglecting the spiritual corridors of their profounder consciousness. The divine life, love, beauty, and goodness are revealed to men through the recognition and activity of the same qualities in themselves. As man thinks God-like thoughts and comes into deific conjunction, he also gains an increasing command of spiritual powers and prerogatives.

The testimony of the senses needs constant revision. In unnumbered ways the impressions gained from phenomena are deceptive. The movement of the sun and all the heavenly bodies seems plain, and as we look out of the window of the

limited express, the landscape seems to be flying by. The distant object appears near, and our deeper reason is employed to make constant correction. Modern science resolves matter into force, or vortex movements of the ether. Man's life is not in things, but in ideas, principles, truth, love, and other spiritual realities. The lack of faith still leads him mistakenly to think that he can "live by bread alone."

It is not proposed in this connection to discuss the unseen, abstractly, but rather the practical outcome and utility of the activity of faith in connection with it. Faith makes it live. To the faithless the spiritual domain is but an empty void. Assurance peoples it with vital forces, actual as well as potential. What is negation to the natural eye is the most solid and real of all things. The common estimate is reversed, for the material becomes relatively immaterial. "Salvation by faith" not by dogma, ritual, thirty-nine articles, intercession or substitution, is the profound truth in all religions. Says Dr. James Freeman Clarke, in his review of St. Paul's ideas of "Justification by Faith":

"Therefore in all ages and lands, men have sought to take hold of something higher than themselves —

something supernatural, superhuman, unchanging. In this ever-rolling sea of time, they drop their anchor, hoping to strike something solid beneath which will hold them firm. It strikes a sacrament, and holds by that a little while; and then comes a storm, and it breaks away. It catches a saint, and holds by him; to an inspired prophet and apostle, and holds by him. But these also give way, and at length it strikes the rock—the rocky basis of all belief—and takes hold of the Infinite Being himself. There it holds, and holds forever.”

The fundamental basis of all true religion is the assured contact of the human with the divine. The altar, the creed, and even the atonement should not come in between God and the soul. Even if there be truth and goodness in them, they are only incidents on the way. Faith is not incidental, but the vital unifying force. Whatever is interposed is not the goal, but only a resting-place in that direction.

The Church of the Past, with all its complex machinery, has been afraid of faith, and this fear has not been limited to the Roman establishment. When Luther proclaimed, “Salvation by faith,” the whole fabric of ecclesiasticism was shaken. He knew no indirection. The divine fire burned within his soul. Sweeping aside intermediaries, he triumphantly sung :

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing ;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing."

The religious systems, with rare exceptions, have inculcated fear of God, and have assured men that priests must intercede, and ordinances and sacrifices be observed, indicating that salvation must be at second hand. They have directed men to linger in the outer courts of the temple, while an official visit is made to the Holy of Holies. Peradventure God may listen through such an appeal. Jesus said: "Have faith in God." (Mark xi, 22) Then follows a statement of its privileges and possibilities.

Religious intolerance has always waxed bitter toward those who cultivated the immediate presence of God. From the time of the martyr, Stephen, who was so filled with the divine light that his face shone, down through the ages the direct communion of the soul with God has been discouraged and opposed. That beautiful and remarkable modern saint, Madam Guyon, was placed in solitary confinement in the Bastille, because the king and Church were afraid of faith. George Fox and Swedenborg, and a host of others pre-

eminent for Godliness, have been accounted dangerous persons because Church and State were afraid of faith without restrictions. The Quietists of all ages, filled with the inner light, and distinguished in outward life for unselfishness, love, and virtue constitute a long object-lesson of the hostility of the ruling influences to the "divine ardor."

History has shown that the direct communion of the human with the divine has had the effect to render external observances somewhat superfluous. The serene spirit, love, and beauty of character in the Quietist was a strong, though silent rebuke to the prevailing formalism of all ages. Simplicity and the inner light seem like heresy to ceremonialism. But there should be no indiscriminate censure of ceremonies and sacraments. If one is repelled from coming face to face with God, or is not drawn to do so, it is better to let one's priest go to the altar for him, than not to go at all. In fact, it may be freely admitted that for many grades of development, ritual and sacrament are useful and necessary steps. It may be well to find holiness, even in the fringe of a garment, for wherever found it means to the soul, a "feeling after God." Everything on the road upward may be consecrated but should not be idolized.

There have been several distinct revivals of pure faith during the modern period, beside the many notable personal examples which have not been identified with any general movement. Since the great spiritual renaissance that was led by Luther, which ere long lost its purity and became weighted with dogma, faith at various times has reasserted itself in liberal measure. The Friends, or Quakers, as they are often called, headed by George Fox, developed an extensive inspirational movement in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Inner spiritual illumination, with an indifference toward outward ceremonial, and the exercise of direct communion—the human with the divine—were the prominent features of this devoted and non-resistant people. Like all irregulars, or non-conformists of that period, they suffered persecution which they bore with a beautiful and uncomplaining spirit. Their history, from that time down to the present furnishes a shining example of the power of an inner faith, peace, and trust, and a corresponding expression of good works was not lacking.

Another great outburst of faith, combined with little formalism, was that of the Methodist movement of the eighteenth century. In this revival,

there was more outward demonstration. The leading spirits, the Wesleys and Whitefield were inspired with the "divine ardor" and soon had an extensive following in England and America. Methodism became a great power and has been an important element in shaping general religious thought. But theological differences gradually developed, so that the original impulse lost its unity and simplicity, and several divisions or different kinds of Methodists were the result.

The Unitarian movement, in its early history, especially as represented by Dr. Channing, was distinguished by a similar spirituality. It was a protest against and reaction from an overwrought and dogmatic theology. Doctrine had become hard and complicated, but Channing held that every man is a child of God and the subject of divine love. Again, salvation by faith, and the inner oneness of the human and divine were the basis for a fresh inspiration. This spiritual renewal of the early part of the nineteenth century, not only attracted many adherents, but its spirit also penetrated and permeated the existing systems of faith, and this subtle transforming influence outside of its own technical limits has continued down to the present time. While as a religious denomination,

its numerical increase has been very moderate, its liberal spirit has been largely radiated in all directions. As a coherent spiritual movement upon the basis of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, its diffusive tendency has been great. Some of Channing's sublime utterances are winged with rare inspirational truth. In speaking of the freedom of mind which comes through faith in the unseen, he says :

"I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

"I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

"I call that mind free which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself and uses instructions from abroad not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

"I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused."

In the more recent history of religious liberalism, it does not seem quite certain that the high keynote which was sounded by the great Channing has been fully maintained. Good works and altruism are worthy of all praise, and have a most important place, but above them is needed a distinctive faith and spiritual consciousness.

In any review of the successive high tides of a pure and simple faith in supersensuous Reality, there is one so unique that it deserves special attention. The rise of that idealistic philosophy, known as Transcendentalism, which came into wide notice about the middle of the last century was phenomenal. In the most profound sense it was both a religious and spiritual awakening. But any thorough appreciation of its true inwardness was exceedingly rare during its inception, and even to-day, its full recognition is very limited. Emerson was its leading prophet, and his office was as important and well fitted to his time and en-

vironment, as was that of the great Hebrew seer, Isaiah. So completely was Transcendentalism popularly misunderstood that it was accounted not only as irreligious but atheistic. To the religious consciousness of the time, faith had become so wholly identified with dogma, ordinance, sacrament, and ecclesiasticism, that when shorn of these, and presented in its own simple garb, it was not recognized as faith at all. The little band of souls which formed the nucleus of the awakening were not only insignificant in numbers but rated as spiritual iconoclasts. The intuitions of Emerson relating to the cosmic economy have, many of them, been confirmed by the researches of physical science, and his marvelous insight into the higher realm of mind and spirit, is also finding abundant proof in the psychical and spiritual experiences of highly developed souls. Transcendentalism laid the foundation for a practical and wholesome idealism, for a reconciliation between science and faith, for a conscious realism of the unseen, for a true synthesis—drawing together in fitting and harmonious proportion that which men had torn apart—for a beneficent, as well as a unified administration of the moral order and for a universal divine revelation rather than one limited to book or

system. From a vague, irreverent, and speculative philosopher, which was the average opinion of Emerson in his own time, and which perhaps is yet held by the majority, the future will reverence him as the great modern prophet of a natural and rounded faith, and the human channel for a true and progressive spiritual revelation. Original and intuitive souls often come in advance of their fitting evolutionary place. Only as subsequent generations are able to approximate toward their point of view can they be interpreted. In its time Transcendentalism gave little outward sign of that inherent power which since has been unfolding. In its full breadth the movement could not have found an initiative earlier, for the world was incapable of its reception. Previous awakenings fitted to their own time, were able to strip off the external layers of spiritual fruitage and get a near view of its richness, but this laid it bare to its heart and marrow. Much time must yet pass before the Emersonian philosophy will receive due credit for its potential content of faith and spiritual progress. With all of its seeming mysticism and profundity, it tended to make life simple and childlike. It stimulated a natural and wholesome optimism and taught that existence, in itself,

should be a joy and privilege. It showed that ideal man is the true expression of God.

If faith be a perennial and not a capricious or spasmodic force, its practical advantages should be always available. If it be a law it is not subject to suspension or withdrawal. If it were ever potent in the assuagement of physical ills or mental distresses, it is no less so to-day. The faithlessness and materialism of the modern world are especially evident in the absence of any general reliance upon its healing virtues. In this most vital department of human welfare, we choose to "walk by sight" almost exclusively. The striking affirmations which Jesus delivered concerning faith were mainly in reference to its application for human recovery from disease and inharmony. In such beneficent work, he claimed no exclusive power. It was the privilege and prerogative of all "believers." "Greater works than I have done ye shall do." During the days of the Primitive Church, while a simple and strong faith prevailed its exercise in healing demonstration was expected and taken for granted. When that spiritual energy was eclipsed by dogma, theological speculation, and union with the State, it rapidly waned. Nothing would so revive confidence in its vital power in the

eyes of the world, as a new demonstration of its visible and legitimate results. Already there are signs of a pentecostal outpouring, but unlike the former time it doubtless will come into realization gradually and without observation. This phase of the more practical application of the inner power will not be enlarged upon in this connection. It has had special and liberal attention in previous works issued by the author of this volume.

A living faith is the crying necessity of to-day. Scholasticism and a highly wrought intellectual development cannot fill its place. We need an overwhelming consciousness of God, within and without, a feeling that he is revealed in everything, that he is the Force back of all other forces, and the Life of all other lives. The kingdom of God is within and to find it we must become like little children. The great exponents of faith in all ages have been those souls who lived in the universal strength and made their lives channels for the divine energy.

XV

LIFE MORE ABUNDANT

"I CAME that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." (John x, 10) The intimate relation of the divine to the human life is the most fundamental truth that can occupy our attention. How to secure a fuller measure of vitality has been and ever will be the universal quest and most absorbing problem. In dealing with the present plane of human activity, the various departments of physical science have their special fields of inquiry and points of view. They are related to life, but its primal source and constant influx are not of them. It comes "through the Son." But human belief has mainly regarded this higher life as an abstract proposition, and as having application more directly to the future state. But life, while mysterious, is the nearest and most common of all things. In reality, there is but One Life and its flowing is continuous.

Swedenborg affirms that man is so made that he can apply to himself life from the Lord. In cer-

tain lofty conditions of spiritual consciousness, man may become highly charged with a divine vigor and he finds that it is possible to invite and cultivate such experiences. God is our highest ideal of universal and all-abounding life, and through a feeling of oneness we may experience an influx of energy or divine incarnation. If, as Paul affirms, "In him we live and move and have our being," he must be our inmost substance, and our outward states should make a corresponding exhibit. It is of the highest importance that we constantly hold a living consciousness of this relationship.

Our woes and disorders come from the feeling of separateness which we carelessly or unconsciously allow to prevail. While the soul is distinct in its individuality and never loses its identity, it should cultivate a real sense of the divine presence and immanence. We are greatly inclined to think of theology as religion, but they are far from being the same. Religion is a binding to God, while theology is an opinion about him. Health is a symptom of full and exuberant life and its relation to religion is most intimate. There may be a certain animal vigor, but wholeness, in its complete sense, involves a distinct spiritual element. While all living creatures derive

their life from God, the human recognition of its incoming rounds out and increases the healthfulness which is available to man. The Psalmist speaks of God, "Who is the health of my countenance."

The reaching out of the soul toward God is true prayer. In the general sense prayer needs to be redefined. It is commonly regarded as petition, or asking for something which has been withheld and is at present lacking. But in its depth it is rather a recognition of what already is. St. Paul reminds us that "All things are yours." The divine exuberance is never suspended but our souls are unresponsive and not open to receive. Can one hunger when in the midst of nourishing and delicious viands? It is quite possible if he does not make himself aware of their presence. With closed eyes he might starve. It is the fault of the condition within rather than that without. The opening of the soul upward and the exercise of faith are necessary to the appropriation of the good which is in readiness.

Says James in his general epistle, "The prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." The work comes not merely through prayer but through "the prayer of faith,"

Faith in anything involves conscious dependence upon it. Faith is not real faith until it is sufficiently living and tangible in the soul to be the main reliance. Material forces, as temporary and auxiliary may have their place, but faith will not yield its energy if made secondary. It belongs at the head. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This does not especially refer to graven images, but to a divided and doubtful allegiance. To make God secondary as a healing agency is an inversion of the divine order. In modern life, even among those who call themselves Christians, material science has largely usurped the first place. The living faith, as a restorative, which was normal and practical in the days of the primitive church has been crowded out by lower agencies. By a long and almost unconscious process these have become "other gods."

"He that hath the Son hath the life." (1st John v, 12) It seems plain that this means Sonship, a spiritual relation which is open to all, here and now. It is not limited to some future or distant realm of being. The incarnation of the spiritual Christ is the coming of the Son, and it brings life, or rather is life. The "coming" is the awakening from latency of that which is already within. It is the

uncovering of the divine image in which man was created, the quickening of his essential nature and potentiality. The biblical teaching of these vital principles is very emphatic and constantly repeated.

It is admittedly unconventional to place the "prayer of faith" among the health-giving forces of the present time, but if the light of the Bible be shed upon the philosophy of life, there can be no uncertainty in the conclusion. In the event of some extraordinary public emergency, the prayer of petition is resorted to, but little is said of an abounding faith. If the restorative prayer of faith be divinely instituted, why should it not be regularly employed without reserving it for special occasions? Physical functions derive their energy from the primal spiritual functions which correspond to and are back of them, and it is the power of faith which calls forth their activity.

The goal of the higher development is the opening of the spiritual consciousness. This is the divine and true point of view rather than that of materiality. We need to be made free from the old limitations of sense and slavery to the flesh. The Apostolic gifts of the Spirit are offered without money and without price. As soft iron which in its natural state is inert and passive, may, through

the influence of magnetic contact, be filled with a powerful quality which gives polarity to every molecule and makes the whole mass a positive force, so the physical organism may receive a spiritual potency and physical energy. Spirit is the primal substance because it is the foundation of the material organism and all outward expression.

Briefly classified, we have three kinds of substance not separate but each within the other. The material body is interpenetrated by the psychic and both of these by the spiritual, which is primal and absolute. These are not apart by spatial conditions but by discrete degrees of refinement and subtle inner relation. Nothing is displaced, but each being more refined in vibration, dwells within the other. The realm of primal causation, being that which is most interior, should, as a duty and privilege, be consciously identified with the ego. "The kingdom of God is within you." To have an abiding-place within that realm puts us in direct contact with the Divine Mind. This is "the secret place of the Most High," and lies above the zone of change and uncertainty. This hidden place of rest and recuperation is no poetic extravagance, but a veritable reality, but it must be earnestly sought by those who would have it at command. Gross

and solid physical forms cannot permeate each other, but these properties are no obstacle to the occupation of spiritual substance. In the Gospel of John, we are told that after the resurrection Jesus was able to pass through closed doors and to manifest himself in bodily form and appearance.

The Christian Church, by a continued non-recognition of the life-giving power and psychic and spiritual potency of the gospel, in dealing with human disorders, has made an omission which has shorn it of its normal power and adaptability. The promised "signs" which were to follow those who believe have been wanting, and thus the consciousness of the multitude who live upon the lower plane — being unable to comprehend abstraction — behold no works which can appeal to them. The power of the gospel must reach men where they are and demonstration should meet them upon their own level. The mission of Jesus was to hand his convincing proof down to dull souls and to talk to them in a language which they could understand.

The unusual works accomplished by the Master, which are called miracles, have been looked upon as special and not in accord with the inherent nature of things. Having been accounted as violations or suspensions of the established order, their

practice and perpetuation have not been expected. In spiritual attainment men do not find what they have, in advance, decided to be impossible. Humanity has been reckoned as fallen and unspiritual and therefore has not claimed spiritual Sonship which Jesus not only demonstrated but declared belonged to all. The truth has seemed too good to be worthy of belief, and this has put a living faith out of the question. In effect men have regarded the world as governed by caprice instead of beneficent law.

The "wonderful works" recorded in the gospel narratives are variously interpreted. The sceptic and materialist express absolute unbelief in their historical accuracy. Others who claim to believe, accept them as facts, but think them exceptional and beyond the pale of orderly procedure and given only as special "signs" to prove the deity of Jesus. This position ignores the fact that they were common in the primitive church and not confined to the personality, or even the time of the Master. The third and true exposition of the works is, that while exceptional in degree, they form a vital part of the divine human plan, are normal, and under like favoring conditions and development should be duplicated in every age. In

other words, they form a Christian ideal and are neither disorderly nor strange. Can any deep thinker, having in view the history of mankind, reasonably affirm that they are abnormal? How can the scientist be dogmatically opposed to the spiritual philosophy of the source and influx of life when with his own chosen means of investigation it wholly eludes him?

The logic of all philosophy and analogy shows that life and mind build up the physical organism and are not the property or result of it. These invisible and primal forces lay hold of suitable, elemental material, and erect it into corresponding visible articulation. Not technical chemistry, but the chemistry of life, with wonderful skill selects and transmutes the proper materials for its own expressive uses. It unifies and organizes them, and thereby makes outwardly manifest its own plane and nature.

It is a universal law that life of every grade seeks embodiment. It is the executive of its material constituents, and should reign over them. But from the lack of spiritual assertiveness, and a belief in his own inherent weakness, man's grasp upon the embodiment which should serve him becomes weak and uncertain. The dynamic of faith

is lacking and hence cohesive energy is feeble. Disintegration is thereby invited, and, in consequence, life vacates and seeks more suitable conditions.

Life more abundant is the world's need and should be its ideal. Except in a subordinate and temporary way it does not derive its sustenance from matter but its real nourishment is from above. It is entirely reasonable to suppose that as the spiritual consciousness and deeper insight which were possessed by the Prophet of Nazareth are developed by his followers, in any age, they, through orderly divine methods, will "do the works." But this supremacy over lower things will come only as a gradual and sane realization. It is potential and yet mainly latent. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." Nothing could be more positive and no limitation is implied. His message to the world was not some system of theology, standard of ethics, or outward restriction, but, more life. Vigorous life must include love, and love supersedes the ceremonial law. The time is at hand when the Christ which was manifested through Jesus must have wide and general incarnation.

If conversion, instead of being limited to ab-

stract belief and an assent to certain theological doctrine, meant new life and a growing release from fleshly bondage and disorder, how the world would seek it and desire its fruits! There would be an appeal which every man could understand, and it would have overwhelming attraction. This is his lawful inheritance.

That various states of mind directly affect the body no one will deny. This principle once admitted, there remains only a question of our possible control of these states, and an understanding of how they may be invoked and brought into use. The most intense mental action and shaping comes through faith and the imagination. These are the divinest and most potent elements in the soul. True, the creative imaging faculty is capable of perversion, but the same is true of every normal power. Forces, of whatever nature, must be turned in the right direction. Reverse the most useful machine or invention and it becomes destructive. Its goodness is turned to evil. The character of the product of the imagination determines the heavenly or hellish quality of man's interior states.

It may be objected that faith cannot be invoked on demand, and that belief requires evidence for


a foundation. But faith, when cultivated, becomes a veritable kind of knowledge. If it be lacking in external conclusiveness, it awakens an internal proof which is even more satisfactory. Its positive results furnish their own certitude and endorsement. Faith is the saving power of God in proportion as it is relied upon, for it brings the soul into vital contact with the centre and source of all life. Reason and logic are well in their own province, but there is a higher source of knowing. Inward seeing awakens a degree of energy which no outside influence can equal. If a perverted imagination, or evil thinking can cause disorderly conditions, it logically follows that, rightly used, they may heal and restore. The soul is constantly shaping and conveying its quality to the seen organism. "Thy faith hath made thee whole," expresses a law which is as reliable as any principle in chemistry or physics. With the decline of faith the religious life has largely lost its vital element. The intellectual absorption of modern life has usurped the rightful authority of the intuitive or spiritual perception, and it insists upon its supremacy.

In the practice of the Master the conversion of the soul and the healing of physical disorder were

but the internal and external sides of the same process. The bodily expression was reformed through the newness of mind, as a perfectly natural result. The principle is the same as when joy or fear, exaltation or guilt, manifest themselves in facial appearance.

The restorative energy in nature which we always rely upon is a part of the universal divine beneficence and we can accelerate and assist its healing power by thinking and affirming in harmony with it. Such is divine and human coöperation, and God's part is always in readiness, being already complete. It is possible for thought either to promote or obstruct that which we wish to make manifest. God works not from the outside but from within and this unceasingly. Because he dwells in the soul it is easy to find him and come into conscious relation and communion. Neither ordinance, ritual, nor petition can bring him "down" because he is already here.

What we call pain and disease are really the friction which comes from the recuperative energy striving to correct our mistakes and straighten our crookedness. A recognition of their true mission, with a non-resistant attitude, mitigates their discomfort and hastens relief. Though so univer-



sally misapprehended, pain is not an enemy sent to distress us but an angel of mercy in disguise. We furnish it with its armament by our belief of its hostility. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." That feverish condition which we call disease is really the hurried effort of the divine inner forces to expel obstructions and purify "the temple of the Holy Ghost." God is ever working to turn us into the right path, both by its attractiveness and in a negative way by proving to us the bitterness of the one which is wrong.

The Dispensation of the Spirit comes on apace. We are learning that there is a divine side to man which opens into the unfathomable deeps of God's nature. The increasing higher consciousness which forms the true basis of psychic and physical soundness is also manifesting itself in the broadening of theological systems and in the spiritualizing of science itself. Men are "feeling after God" and finding more life. Divinity and humanity shade into each other and a realization of this coalescence furnishes a balm for all the woes of mankind.

XVI

THE FUTURE LIFE

THE teaching of the Bible regarding the future life and its conditions is veiled, and in the Old Testament, especially, there is little recognition of immortality. There is more or less implication in that direction, but a seeming dearth of positive or definite statement. Even in the New Testament, outside of the teaching of Paul—who is the leading theologian of the Bible—allusions to the next plane of existence are few and generally mystical in form. Considering the importance of the subject and its transcendent interest to mankind, we naturally might expect that eschatology or the doctrine of “the last things,” would have a more prominent place in Holy Writ.

Two inferences may be drawn from the apparent lack of biblical emphasis upon ultimate and eternal verities. The first, that for wise reasons there is a curtain, somewhat impenetrable, hung between the two planes of expression, and the second, that the higher life is not another, or a different state

of being, but simply a continuance — in fact, that there is but one life. The arbitrary distinction which is so common is misleading, for it is not life but its relations and methods which change.

Without dogmatizing upon the conditions which follow the event called death, we have sufficient light upon this great problem, both from the Bible and through spiritual perception for all practical purposes. It is reasonable to conclude that as we are constituted, some mystery regarding the last things is best. Every revelation comes to us when it is matured, or rather when we are ripened for the same, and never before. We crave positive evidence, but perhaps have not considered all the factors which are involved. There is ever a beyond of the indefinable to which the human mind is reaching forth, and it is not for us to know it all. We may well reserve a little room for future revelations of truth. Faith and hope are fundamental faculties in human consciousness, and they require a field for exercise. Were we able fully to penetrate the future, even of the present life, there would be a loss of rich anticipation, no place for "walking by faith," and no field for fresh and buoyant expansion. We have an equipment for a mystical looking forward and upward,

and it must be used, otherwise atrophy will result. Without denying — in fact accepting the possibility and even utility of communications across the line — there is still enough that is incomprehensible to call out the delightful prophetic activities and visions of the soul. Even if we accept the clearest and most definite testimonies which are wafted back to us from those who have laid aside the visible form, there is yet an important residuum of mystery. Our sensuous and even our intellectual equipment does not serve us in that direction, and it is not intended that it should. What would become of all the grand ideals, hopes, and aspirations which now attract us forward if we could see clearly in advance? Expansion requires room ahead. Life, love, truth, and progress are certain, because they are unending in their nature. These we know positively because we have their samples within, while the realm of mystery, both here and hereafter, is in environment and relation.

Life, now and forever, is an individuated and enduring stream of soul force — a microcosmic current of the divine energy in a local channel. Because it is spiritual it is immortal. Upon the present plane of existence it takes hold of, and objectifies some passive material which we call

matter. The real or spiritual self builds up a visible organism and takes it into temporary partnership to register and interpret itself outwardly. But even matter is indestructible. Water may be transformed into ice or steam without coming to an end, or losing any of its potential energy. It has a kind of life, but how much higher and more coherent is that of the soul! The conservation of energy, scientifically established in the physical realm, has its correspondence in the zone above. Form and expression change, but energy, of whatever quality, never ceases. The soul, here and hereafter, acts upon related environment and also receives orderly reaction from the same.

Death is the laying down of an instrument which is no longer fitted for, or responsive to soul growth. It is emergence from an "outgrown shell." To be dead is good if it be death in the right direction. It is the leaving behind of that which is no longer useful. Death to sin is life to righteousness. Such is the real "resurrection," rather than any collecting of dust which once served as a temporary costume or tenement. Few now hold to the dogma of a material reconstruction of dust, and it is plain that it is not necessary to identity. The creeds, in the letter, seem to

teach it, but their unresponsiveness to present actual belief shows how fossilized they have become.

But while death in the usual sense is only an event in life, we may naturally ask, is physical dissolution—as a method of advancement—to be ultimately outgrown, and is it in some sense a failure of the normal spiritual ideal? Is that unwelcome process forever to remain as the only gateway between the present expression and that which is higher and more refined? Of what will consist the vanquishment of “the last enemy” to which Paul makes repeated reference? It is now coercive, and to common consciousness abrupt and unlovely in character. This question does not directly bear upon immortality, but though secondary is of deep interest. Toward what should we aim, and what will be the normal and ideal transition? The present crude embodiment is not fitted for a spiritual inheritance. Will it forever continue to be necessary to bury it out of sight, “dust to dust,” or is there to come a time when a gradual spiritualization and refinement will leave no impurity to deposit? Immortality in the crude fabric of the present is impossible, while continuance in a more refined organism would at least fill

the assumption of the defeat of death, as it is now known. Will the process of the higher evolution finally bring the time for the race when there will be nothing earthy to give back? Does the Bible, the Book of types and ideals, throw any light upon this problem? If the experiences of Enoch and Elijah have valid typical significance, we must conclude that they are in accord with a higher law, to which gradual conformity will be a human achievement. Paul affirms (Hebrews xi, 5) that, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him." Is there any other way in which death, defined as an event, can be "swallowed up in victory"? Modern interpretation shows that nothing happens by chance or is arbitrary, so that if there be validity in the accounts of Enoch and Elijah, it logically follows that they were advanced and ripened types of a spiritual quickening which is normal and potentially available. A completed type, as an ideal, may greatly anticipate racial human achievement and not be contrary to evolutionary precedent. What a complete triumph over "the king of terrors" there would be in a recognition of the normality and possibility of a beautiful and orderly translation as the human goal. Such

a vision of the coming time would inspire a new faith in the divinity of man.

But turning to death as now defined and as presented in the Bible, aside from the exceptions before noted, the dissolution of the tie between the soul and its material servant is beautifully likened by Paul to the sowing of seed. "It is sown a natural (earthy) body and raised a spiritual body." A spiritual body must be an organism, a real unitary entity with members which are fitted to its new relations and surroundings. We are not to be disembodied spirits, but "clothed upon." Such an organic being involves individuality, consciousness, and even definite place. That which is "dead" — left behind — enters into new relations upon its own plane, while the soul or spiritual body which has dwelt within it steps forth untrammelled. The man himself is intact. As the infant upon its entrance into the outward world has lungs already prepared to inhale the atmosphere of its new realm, so the developed man comes into the spiritual environment with a ready adjustment. Among all the grades of being, from the monad, upward, the moral order never presents any unfledged candidate for advancement. Under the cover of the old, his new equipment in some measure has been provided.

Paul reminds us that the seed which is cast into the ground must die—be left behind—before the new and higher order can come into expression. The simile is a beautiful and expressive one. Ripeness and seeming decay in the lower is followed by newness in the higher. By immutable law the oak comes from the acorn, and can the higher steps of life be any less certain of succession and orderly identity?

But the “resurrection” in a vital sense, quite independent of the event of physical dissolution, is an advancement of the soul to a higher life and consciousness. It is taking place every day, in and all about us. The immaterial and immortal forward trend is not conditioned upon material events or conditions. Life! Whether here or hereafter; how much its expansion includes and what wonders are to be unwrapped and made manifest! Even in the lowest orders, no chemistry can discover its secret. Think what it means to have a body which is “incorruptible”! No weakness, decay, disease, or physical limitation. Primarily, it is not in the province of the intellect to prove validity of a conscious existence after death. It is beyond its latitude and in deep soundings its testing line is too short. Our ears

are receptive to atmospheric vibrations and our eyes to those that are etheric, which we call light. Everything has its peculiar office and one faculty does not perform the function of another. But while the cognizance of the future is not of the intellectual order, there are certain logical implications which are conclusive.

Take the "law of supply and demand," and consider its universality. Though mainly recognized in its material application its higher range will be evident. The paramount wonder and glory of the divine order is its unity and interrelation. Nothing is superfluous and nothing can be spared. Everything is related to everything else. As Emerson aptly says:

" All are needed by each one ;
Nothing is fair or good alone."


Supply and demand are the positive and negative poles of being, and each is a sure prophecy of the other. In vain do we look for either in any realm of matter or mind without a conscious recognition of its counterpart. Each demands satisfaction in the other and there is a reaching out until it is gained. The demand for continued existence in the human soul is so nearly universal

that it must be regarded as normal and implanted. Design, compensation, balance, and fitness being found everywhere, they must be profoundly basic in the nature of things. If the soul itself were a unique exception to this natural law, and if it inherently included a positive desire for what is not to be, we might well conclude that all analogy is valueless, and that the moral order is planned to deceive. Where in the whole cosmos can an exception to the law be found? A well formed wrist without a hand, an eye with nothing outside to see, and an ear-drum especially designed for vibrations when there were no vibrations, would be no more irrational than that a soul should come to an end. Did one ever find a leaf and have any doubt about the existence of a tree?

Man in his very constitution is designed to receive revelations of truth, and revelations are therefore scientific in a strict sense. In proportion as the human mind is held open to the divine Spirit of Truth a positive assurance of the future is developed. It unfolds like a plant in the sunshine. If we are offshoots of the infinite intelligence — children of God — we must be spirit, and spirit is immortal. Man is made of God-stuff. A constant oneness with the Universal furnishes a certificate

that man, in his real being, is no less permanent than the Divine Being. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." That which is perfect cannot be subject to loss or decay. Man's divinity is a guarantee of his persistence and duration, and his divinity comes as a progressive revelation of himself to himself.

The evidence of the future life already adduced makes it practically unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the actual testimony which comes from friends in the higher life. Under certain favorable conditions those who have left us behind manifest themselves and make communications. The realization of this fact is no longer limited to those who technically call themselves "spiritualists," or to people who from motives of curiosity merely seek the phenomenal for its own sake. Among those who are definitely known as spiritualists, there are many who are as reputable, conscientious, and intelligent as any members of the community, and many of them use their best efforts to root out the fraud and charlatanism which is known to masquerade under their general name. Some of the most careful and conservative scientists of the present era, whose names are known and honored throughout the civilized world,




unhesitatingly affirm the validity of intelligible messages from the Beyond. While the writer has made but little personal concrete investigation, he regards the fact of the passage of thought and recognition between the two planes of expression as well and forever established. The time has passed when any one who has regard for truth can find any excuse for dogmatic denial which when made is usually without any attempt at honest investigation. While the mystery may not be fully cleared up until there is a higher spiritual level, and while the veil may not be removed, it will probably grow thinner. If we live in a social universe, and if there is a certainty of love and interest, what more natural than the desire on each side of the line for some real sign or message from the other? If our dear friends cross the Atlantic do we not rightly seek, and do they not desire to send us tidings of their welfare and progress? It is our materialism and abnormal ideas of the transition which has put the natural counterparts wide asunder. Such a consciousness regarding the higher sphere does not comport with the spirit of an enlightened Christianity or a living faith and trust. When we "lose friends," let us cultivate the feeling that they are not far away, lost to

former ties, interests, and friendly oneness, but, though invisible to the dull organs of sense, are right in our midst as they are drawn or can render service. In conventional "spiritualism," there is much that is unspiritual, spectacular, and not genuine. This is admitted by its best exponents. But can we find any philosophy or even religion that is free from human flaw? Crossing the line makes no one truly spiritual. Character and inner unfoldment is not a matter of place or condition. The laws through which tidings from beyond are practicable are yet but vaguely understood. In general, the instrument through which they are conveyed is liable to give some local coloring which may modify their integrity. Certain subjective conditions, methods, and attunement are necessary to successful communication. In the lower range of the telephone or wireless telegraphy the utmost delicacy of adjustment to their own laws is indispensable, and nothing less could be expected on the psychic and spiritual levels.

Even on the other side, there is an earthly zone of ignorance, crudeness, and darkness which is wrapped about the mundane consciousness. This dense obstruction prevents a free and ready interchange across the line between the higher and

purser souls in either direction. The dark belt includes the abuses and the negative side of what, rightly used, would be normal and wholesome. These lower states are denominated in the Bible as witchcraft, familiar spirits, evil possession, and other abnormal conditions which include the activities of low and undeveloped "spirits in prison." The unclean and devilish elements are over there as well as here, and they are drawn to mingle with and influence their kind who are still in the flesh. There is a realm of the occult which is unspiritual and which should be avoided. The Bible is crowded with references to spiritual intelligences of widely diverse character. There are many terms employed which to us have become almost meaningless, but they all have spiritual significance. We read of angels, archangels, seraphs, messengers, the heavenly host, heaven opened, visions and trances, as signifying exalted intelligences, experiences and states of being. Perhaps an equal number of terms are used to define low and contrasted conditions. The Bible is not honored by regarding either as mythical or insignificant. By immutable law every order of character and consciousness is attracted to its "own place." Saint John, "the divine," in that highly



symbolic Book of Revelation, names certain moral qualities which persist and these are evidently typical of all. He that is "unrighteous," "filthy," "righteous," or "holy," let him be so "still." It is also added that reward is rendered to each man "according as his work is." This does not indicate that there is to be no progress, but rather that it is to be wrought out through great effort.

The degree of salvation to which we are heirs corresponds with the ideals of the heart. Even if these are high, we are incapable, except in some measure through the eye of faith, of understanding the unseen world. But our imagination is a divine faculty of creative power and it may be profitable at times to free it in range, send it aloft, and through it to cultivate our spiritual discernment. Paul declares that, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Saint John also delineates the splendors of the heavenly state to the extent of the power of human imagery. Can we catch a glimpse of what an ideal salvation may be? What wonders of beauty and harmony, and how glorious the celestial sunshine! What a warm unison of love thrills through reunited souls!

What restoration and compensation! What an introduction to grand spiritual activities and unexpected ministries of loving service! What far-reaching vistas and opportunities for educational advancement. How many mysteries solved and anxious fears allayed! How many new faculties and powers unfolded and exercised! What an increase of knowledge and breadth of view! What journeys of exploration, unhindered by the boundaries of time and space! What eons of spiritual progression stretch on and upward toward the ultimate goal and Ideal!

XVII

THE GLORY OF THE COMMON- PLACE

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue."

IF this familiar sentiment be true of the things of sense, it is still more marked in the realities of the higher realm. The human mind is prone to rear its altars and erect its sanctities in the far-away and unknown. The imagination takes wings and discovers the Golden Age in the hazy mist of the remote past. The inauguration of the heavenly harmony is pushed forward beyond the confines of a chasm of interminable ages. What is near-by is rated as common and prosaic. It lacks the charmed atmosphere with which the soul invests its distant fancies and sacred visions.

It is a strange mistake to heap up devotion upon the long-ago, to the neglect of the realization of the divine immanence of to-day. Historic shrines, holy relics, and sacred places absorb the interest and draw out the soul. Instead of emulating the

life and spirit of the old-time prophets, we build tombs for them and consecrate their remains. Tradition would restore old walls which have served their purpose. What an object lesson of the possible furore of this spirit is furnished by the history of the crusades! An idolatrous homage paid to material sacred remnants swept over Europe in great psychological waves. It was a contagion which demonstrated the force of the far-away. Palestine was sacred soil, and the Holy Sepulchre and Cave of the Nativity were priceless jewels to be snatched from the grasp of the infidel at any sacrifice of blood and treasure. Untold thousands of young lives were wasted for this purpose by endless marches, famine, and war. All this received the high sanction of popes and monarchs, and was carried on under the banner of the Cross of the Prince of Peace. The colossal tragedies of the "Children's Crusades" and of constant disasters were not sufficient to cool the blind zeal which for a considerable part of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries sapped the life-blood of Christian Europe. What horrors have been perpetrated in the name of religion!

Traditional sanctity is so easy and sentimental that we may draw an outline as large as we will,

and fill it in, and yield it homage. But that prophetic and poetic spirit which is unhampered by land-marks finds truth in the eternal Now, independent of time and space. The spiritual world is located neither in the dim past nor the remote future, but we are living in it to-day, even though unconsciously. We only lack awareness of the great reality.

Turning to the natural world for correspondence and illustration, if we look deeply we are overwhelmed by the wonders of that which is in most immediate proximity. Modern science affirms that the laws and activities of the cosmos and solar system are duplicated not only in man — the microcosm — but in the atom. The universe without, is no more complicated or marvelous, than the universe within. The creative order repeats itself through all relativities and correspondences. Every seed and bulb which we brush aside in our pathway carries within it the implied promise of a general resurrection. Every flower or twig which we count as a trifle is an orderly expression of the Universal Life. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Not mainly by a study of that which is imposing and afar-off, but more by what is near and in thyself. We extol

the great, but the infinitesimal has yet to receive appreciation. An eminent scientist has recently made the startling suggestion that below us in the scale of being there may exist molecular universes with intelligences and even civilizations. Every atom and molecule has its own peculiar vibration and rhythm, and thus joins in the universal anthem of praise to its Maker.

Was God nearer to the world in the days of the patriarchs and prophets than he is to-day? Is he not as ready to lead our nation as he was the Hebrew people? Why do men hunt for him in the darkness and distance rather than in the light, and near-by? Special devotion to the sanctities of the dead past, through mistaken contrast, takes from the present a large part of its value and beauty. Whittier voices the spiritual ideal :

“ That all of good the past hath had
Remains to make our own time glad,
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

“ Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore.
God's love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere.”

What is near-by and now, includes all the potentiality and inspiration of the past and future. "Day unto day uttereth speech," if we will but listen. "The flower in the crannied wall" is as marvelous as the milky way. The mountain shrinks in importance beside the mind which can measure and weigh it and divine its laws. If the image of God is inscribed in every soul, must we necessarily gaze for it through a long vacancy of time and space? "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

XVIII

THE FORWARD MARCH


"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

It is against the deepest law of our nature that we ever should be at rest. There never has been, nor ever will be a time in the history of the race when the onward impulse of life will finally relapse into quiescence. Man is made to march on. Truth is marching on, and in a deep sense, God is marching on. We arrive at some place where "every prospect pleases" and think we will rest, but hardly pitch our tent before we get the order to strike camp and go forward.

But not all that seems new is a part of real progress. There is a well-made highway upon which we may safely advance, but many "reformers" wish to take some short cut and essay to cheat evolution through a panacea of their own devising. One would introduce, on demand, a new social order or inaugurate through legislative contrivance

some economic revolution. Only do this, or that, and then sit down and rest. The world teems with those experimenters who believe that man can be made over from the outside. Some who count themselves fervent in Christian faith often reverse the processes which Jesus practiced, and arbitrarily set up an artificial standard or dogma in his name. They inquire, "exactly what would he do in this or that material position in modern life?" and then proceed to make a very positive answer. Like some of his zealous followers of old, they would take him by force and proclaim him king. When that spirit prevailed, he withdrew, usually to some desert-place for retirement.

While it is of profound importance to apply the Christ spirit in daily life, it savors of cant to affirm with certainty just what Jesus would do in this position or that. His real power resides in the wonderful simplicity of his life. The necessity for outward reforms, and the overthrow of collective evils in entrenched positions was never greater than in his day. But in recognition of the principle that they are results rather than causes, he made no direct attack upon them. It was his to "lay the axe at the root of the tree," to get back of superficial expressions and delve in the deeper



realm of the hidden source. He dealt not directly with politics, Roman rule, or imperfect institutions, but only with the springs of action. Conduct is but the articulation of thought and character and can be sweetened and purified only at the fountain head. To build a dam in the bed of a flowing stream a little higher in order to stop its flow is futile. It soon runs over with the same vigor as before. To many reformers who engage themselves upon the surface of life, the work of Jesus, were it repeated to-day, would seem to have little practicality. True progress is not superficial and confined to the betterment of man upon the material plane, but is rather new inward life. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

The human soul is making greater forward progress than ever before because it is profoundly convinced that God is working through it instead of altogether outside. The thought which we are leaving behind is that God approached man, while the new consciousness is God at the centre. "Behold I make all things new." The Psalms are the poetic and inspirational expression of religious feeling at the time of David. But to the man of to-day, the truth which is enshrined in psalmody should mean a great deal more. With

our modern appreciation of God in the cosmos, and his fuller revelation in the soul, and in events, every sublime recognition should be broader and deeper.

We need not attack the more restricted faiths of the past. They have served their purpose and fitted their own time and generation. They simply recede as we press forward and behold a vaster horizon and more perfect harmony. Let us think of the universal trend as onward, and forever onward. It may aid our concept to image the movement in terms of space. Life is not merely continued existence but a constant renewing and creating. There is the opening of new senses and a clearer and farther view through new vistas. We move forward, as does also the ground upon which we stand. While the soul is unfolding, everything outside is engaged in the same process. If youth in years cannot return, let us cling to its spirit, affirm its cheer, and take optimism for our guest. It is the puny and temporary detail of life that holds us down and back. We must gather new and grander thoughts and clothe ourselves with them as with a garment.

The supreme fact of living is change. Fixedness, and even consistency, in the usual sense,

stifles the soul. The Spirit is ever making new revelations and suggestions to the individual who is receptive. "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Fidelity to present truth and the vision of to-day, lays the foundation for the larger outlook of to-morrow. Our starting-point is the place where our predecessors left off. We plant our feet upon the terrace built by their utmost reach. If our new earth be larger than our old, the new heaven must correspondingly expand.

The true index of any stage of growth is its ideal of God. Says Dr. McConnell in his very valuable book, "Christ," regarding past concepts of God:

"He issued ukases; he promulgated laws; he directed events, and summoned offenders to be dealt with as rebels; he was above all responsibility; he was, in a word, the quintessence of Absolutism throned at the center of the universe. . . . This conception of God satisfied. It fitted and was correlated with the actual life and thought of the people who 'bowed the knee' before him. Their political life was its reflection; their social life was organized from the bottom up on the monarchical principle. At its summit was the King, and above him was the King of Kings. It is more than merely interesting to note the extent to which the language of religion is to this day colored by the imagery of political absolutism."

The great forward trend, to many, looks like an uncertain drifting, a recession from old and well-established landmarks. Has truth solid outlines, and if so how can we distinguish them from the dissolving objects which are moving about us? "Watchman, what of the night?" Do the flashes of light and shade presage a new and brighter day? Yes! The great drift is taking us toward the morning. A grand highway is being cast up and levelled. In the midst of all the seeming chaos, not a verity is destroyed and not a vital principle is fading. It is only the morbid growths which are sloughing off. The Bible itself is not being lost but saved. Saved to reason, to true philosophy, and pure spiritual science! Saved to knowledge, logic, and the higher interpretation! Lost to ignorance, superstition, and bigotry! Perchance the warped vision of the atheist or materialist may make it seem to him that the great drift is toward his own position. This is because he has taken the scaffoldings of religion to be the temple itself. As these are stripped away the Building stands out in its own wonderful beauty and symmetry.

Like a great river which runs into the sea, the outflow of life is toward God. He has entered

the soul and by progressive steps is working out the ideal of divine and human oneness. Men are joining hands to help each other over slippery places to a firmer footing. They are saving their lives by losing them.

Only the false, the unreal, and the unlovely are drifting backward, while truth, love, and goodness rise up in front like grand mountain peaks on the horizon which we are gradually nearing. The existing commotion is a symptom of advance. The virtue of that which we are leaving behind is based largely upon repression from without. The spiritual energy and light of the new era are to be radiant from the centre, and light up the pathway which will shine more and more "unto the perfect day."

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